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**HOW I BECAME A BOY-SCOUT,
MET DOCTOR MENGELE,
WORKED ON SECRET GERMAN WEAPONS
AND AND SOLD DURACELL BATTERIES
WORLD-WIDE**

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PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

The pilot fitted me into a parachute and said: "Should you find yourself suddenly in mid-air", -- and pointing to a handle -- "pull on this handle vigorously". I was an industrial photographer working out of New York City. My assignment for the Michel Carter advertising agency was to photograph the first version of the Boeing 747 in the air and on the ground in Everett Washington where these planes were assembled. It had the markings "Boeing 747" painted on each side of the fuselage. When flying too slowly it would drag its tail, not desirable in a photo. The photo plane, had to be fast enough to keep up with the 747. However, propeller planes were not fast enough, and small rental jets were rare at the time, moreover, jets are pressurized and have no openings to stick out a camera. I found a Boeing-26 on the Everett airfield. Running its engines at full power, it was to be fast enough for a 747 in level flight. We drove over to the plane. It was not a cheering site. Painted black, standing in the middle of a vast puddle of oil. The Boeing-26 had two oval small doors in the rear, one on each side. A possible place for photographing. It was ready the next day, rear doors removed. In addition to the parachute I was given a head-set to communicate with the pilot. We were in the air less than an hour. The 747 following us banking left, right, trying hard not to overtake us. It worked out, --- barely.

After surviving Auschwitz I had arrived in the United States in 1946 and became a photographer specializing in aerial, scientific, and industrial photography. The Boeing assignment was one of many

industrial jobs I had done since my arrival but, let me start at the beginning.

Friends and relatives urged me to write my biography. I did reluctantly, because I knew I would discover that I am not tall, dark, and handsome after all, in addition it will open old wounds better left untouched. Goethe warned, it is difficult to get rid of the spirits, the ghosts, who at three in the morning come visiting.

* * *

PRAG 1917

A few minutes from the Old Town Square (photo) in the center of Prag, at that time still part of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy, stands a middle-class apartment house. Built at the turn of the century it has five floors uninteresting, rather dull. After my arrival there, on the third floor, my life turned out to be anything but dull. As a matter of fact I could have done without half the “excitements” in store for me.

Mother, one of 10 children, came from Iglau a city half way between Vienna and Prag in the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands. From about 1240 Iglau's prosperity rested on its silver mines, probably the reason why I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth – or was I ?

Iglau, in the midst of a Czech speaking population, was a German speaking Island. Mother was a handsome woman, red haired and blue-eyed. Everybody in her family was Jewish, but none of them were religious. One can call them “reformed” or “assimilated”. little remained of their Jewishness, but they were, and thought of themselves as Jews.

An extraordinary photo, taken in 1919, survived. It shows a wholly assimilated well-to-do Family looking very German. They are gathered around a birthday table decked with the traditional Kugelhupf cake celebrating grandfather's 68th birthday. He was born on September 8 1851. Sigmund had taken over his father's corn business. The place of the birthday celebration is the garden of the Grünfeld residence in Iglau. At the center, looking like Kaiser Franz-Joseph, sits Sigmund Grünfeld my grandfather. To his right, sophisticated and distinguished, his wife Paula, ne: Schulhof, my grandmother. She had remarkable relatives. A first cousin was the chief designer of the monarchy's



1 ALL SITTING ON MY FATHER'S LAP



largest battle-ship, the "Viribus Unitis". For this accomplishment he was knighted: Engineer "Friedrich von Popper". Others were Richard Schulhof, of all things, a lion-hunter. His Jewish mother could have introduced him as: "My son the Lion hunter". Wilhelm Zilzer was a mountain-climber, and the first to climb one of the "Drei(three) Zinnen" forbidding looking rocks in the Dolomites, the Italian alps. He was a swimmer too, and the first to "circum-swim Vienna. To Sigmund's left sits his oldest daughter Fritzzi, blind since her childhood from scarlet fever. she became a well-known personality in her field: blindness rehabilitation. One of her many hobbies was gourmet cooking, translating books from French to German, playing piano, and more. Her advice was sought by many who had lost their eye-sight.

Next to Grandmother is my father holding me on his knee, and Else, my mother, on my right. In front sitting on a ceramic mushroom stool is my sister Edith wearing a big bow-tie in her hair. The ceramic mushroom had just been retrieved moments earlier from a garden shed. Some junk had to be removed to get it out. Aunt Fritzzi, blind, fell over it. My sister admonished her: "Why don't you watch out" Mother stopped her: "Edith, be quiet, Fritzzi is blind". My sister did not know what it meant. Mother explained it and Edith, while sitting for the photo closed her eyes to envision blindness.

The women in the photo are dressed in German Dirndeln. The men were recently discharged from the Austrian army. Ernst, on the left, the oldest son, will take over grandfather's Corn business. Karl on the right will become a bank manager, and Richard, my father, was to become the CEO of the largest Austrian lumber company. Lumber was one of Austria's major export item. The others are Hanne, Hedwig, Grete, Otto and Julia. Behind Hanne stands her husband Alfred

Sommer. However, these German looking, German speaking, with German names, and German clothes people attended synagogue. They also met at grandmother's home weekly for the traditional Friday night dinner. Uncle Julius cut up a loaf of white bread and each of us got a little slice. Julius was the role-model, because he was successful and well-to-do. I never liked him, as a matter of fact I loathed the bastard, but he had a sense of humor. I was all of six when he said: "If you want to visit my relatives back in Drohobić you'll need a ladder." Why, I asked? Because they all were hanged !?

On Friday nights uncle Julius read from the prayer book verses in Hebrew. On Yon Kippur, my parents and my sister fasted, I was told I was too young. My mother usually expressed regrets that we did not attend Synagogue. This was the extent of our religious activities.

I never was drawn to religion, any religion. As a matter of fact, at sixteen I had myself declared "Konfessionslos", without religion.

Eight members, including my parents, of this family perished in Hitler's extermination camps.

My father, one of six boys, came from a small village in Bohemia where only Czech was spoken. I know little about my father's family, but I do know they too were not religious Jews.

Immediately after the war, in 1945, in need of documents I traveled to my father's village, Prasny-Ujezd near Pilsen. Looking for the town-hall I was told by a villager there is none, our village is too small. To get information walk to the next village, they kept our books. I did, and found what I needed.

My father was bilingual, fluent in German and Czech. He served in WW-I as a "Sergeant Major in the Cavalry". My sister was five when I was born. Being older she was not much of a playmate, but came in

handy reading books to me. I was a babe in arms when we moved to Vienna, Kupkagasse 9 in the 8th district, a nice section of town with a pleasant little park, the Hammerling Park. Rupert Johann Hammerling was a poet who, among other things romantically retold the epic of “the wandering Jew”. But, his most remarkable achievement, it seemed a Vienna park named after him. There I played with my friend Willy Schlein, who sported a child’s helmet. Without warning he would raise his arm and shout: “On to Paderborn”. I had no idea what he was talking about, but, I was only four, and Willie’s shout, underscored by the spike on his helmet, made me follow him. But, what was Paderborn? In the Encyclopedia Britannica I discovered it was the birthplace of the Holy Roman Empire where Charlemagne met Pope Leo-III in 799 to discuss the founding of a German nation.

I had come to pick up my buddy Willy at home to go and play in the park, when I overheard his mother admonishing him in the kitchen: I don’t like you mixing with these rich Jews. I was perplexed having never been told about being rich and being a Jew. It was my first encounter with prejudice.

* * *

SUDDENLY WE WERE RICH

Within a short time father became the executive director of the largest Austrian lumber company: "Die Niederoesterreichische Wald und Holz A.G." He was exceedingly successful, and my parents (photo) had no problems embracing Vienna's "good" life. Theirs was a mixture of style with a touch of nouveau-riche. A maid, a cook, a chauffeur, custom made clothes, Fur-coats, Jewelry, and more seemed to contribute to their "happiness", like mother's black pearl necklace. I did not like them, because pearls were supposed to be white. My parents visited spas, Father a "Fat-Farm". returning with photos showing him in shorts, standing in the snow, cutting wood ! I was awed. My parents kept a box at the Wiener Staatsoper, the opera, reserved seats at the "Theater in der Josephstadt". Membership at the Park-Klub, a tennis club in the Prater, the famous 3,200-acre Park, formerly the hunting and riding preserve of the aristocracy, but since 1766 open to the public. This park was dissected by a major thoroughfare, the "Hauptallee", an absolutely straight road leading from the city to the "Lusthaus", a round lighthearted building, formerly one of the many Kaiser's "play-pens".

The Hauptallee was two km long, almost two miles, and the looks of this straight road was a site to behold, particularly when the chestnut trees lining it were in bloom. The raised center lane was used for carriages, and the side lanes for horseback riders and pedestrians. To ride in the Prater, father kept two horses. There were three cars, a company car, a private car with the obligatory flowers in a little vase and a telephone to the chauffeur, and way ahead of the time, we owned also an electric car. The year was 1923 ! It was called "Elektromobil".



My PARENTS 1923

Noiseless and smoke-less it did not bother pedestrians nor did it cause the horses to shy. Automobiles were not permitted, but electromobils were in the Prater. I did not care for it, because it looked more like a carriage and its top speed was only 25 kilometers per hour. I was permitted to sit next to the chauffeur, high up, looking down on the “working-class” and the two passenger seats in the rear.

I resented my parent’s frequent trips to the spas, Karlsbad and Marienbad, because I wanted to be with mother, not the maid. We had gone to the railroad station. The maid held me on her arm waiting for my parents’ return from Karlsbad. When they arrived, mother wanted to pick me up -- and I refused her! I was two, and still remember it today.

Father was over-concerned with my looks. As a rule my hair stood up where it was parted, at the top of my head. I was told over and over to brush it. Once, returning from the barber, who had been told to cut it all off, glancing in the mirror, I broke out in tears bursting out: “Ich bin kein schöner Mensch mehr”, “I am not beautiful anymore”.

Since none of my little friends had them, I was very unhappy with my freckles and red hair. Mother consoled me: “The freckles will be gone when you grow up” but, that was light-years in the future! To really top it all, my French governess was told to admonish me at intervals not to let my lower lip stick out as much it did. She counseled me: “Le levre” !, “Le levre” ! Sigmund Freud, who lived around the corner in the Berggasse, had he known about my “training” would have blown a fuse. I, subconsciously, did. All This “upbringing” raised havoc with my self-esteem and scarred me for life. Nevertheless, I loved my parents, they just did not know any better.

I was four when I imagined to be a locomotive. Using my fists as bumpers and the elongated stones framing the sidewalks around the

house as my tracks I choo-chooed around the block. My ambition was to become a locomotive engineer. Then, one day my father came home with a toy for me, or was it for himself ? A glistening little steam engine driving a generator lighting an electric bulb. I was too young for this “awesome” toy. My father disappeared with the chauffeur into a small room down the hall. I felt impending disaster, and waited outside, terrified, my back pressed against the wall. Suddenly there was an explosion. Something side-swiped my elbow. Father had lit the kerosene heater heating the kettle, however, forgot to fill it with water. The rapidly expanding hot air blew out one side of the steel kettle and it flew with great force against the wall ricocheting out the open door past me down the hall. A deadly toy , never-the-less it started a love affair – my life-long love affair with machinery of any kind.

Just before dusk a man used to walk down the streets raising my curiosity. He was lighting each of the gas street-lamps with a lighter attached to a long bamboo rod. Another man I envied was the trolley car driver. The trolley had no windshield and the driver stood unprotected, exposed to rain or snow, in the very front of the car. He manipulated two large shiny brass handles controlling speed, brakes, and the electric rail switches ahead. I could have driven a trolley too if I could have reached the brass handles.

One day my parents forgot me in Kindergarten. I stood crying inside the building entrance of the Schwartzwaldschule, the fanciest Kindergarten in town, When the chauffeur finally showed up he could hardly find me because a crowd had gathered around the crying little “bubi”.

Summer vacation was exciting, mostly because of the train ride, but so was my first bow and arrow extending my “sphere of influence”,

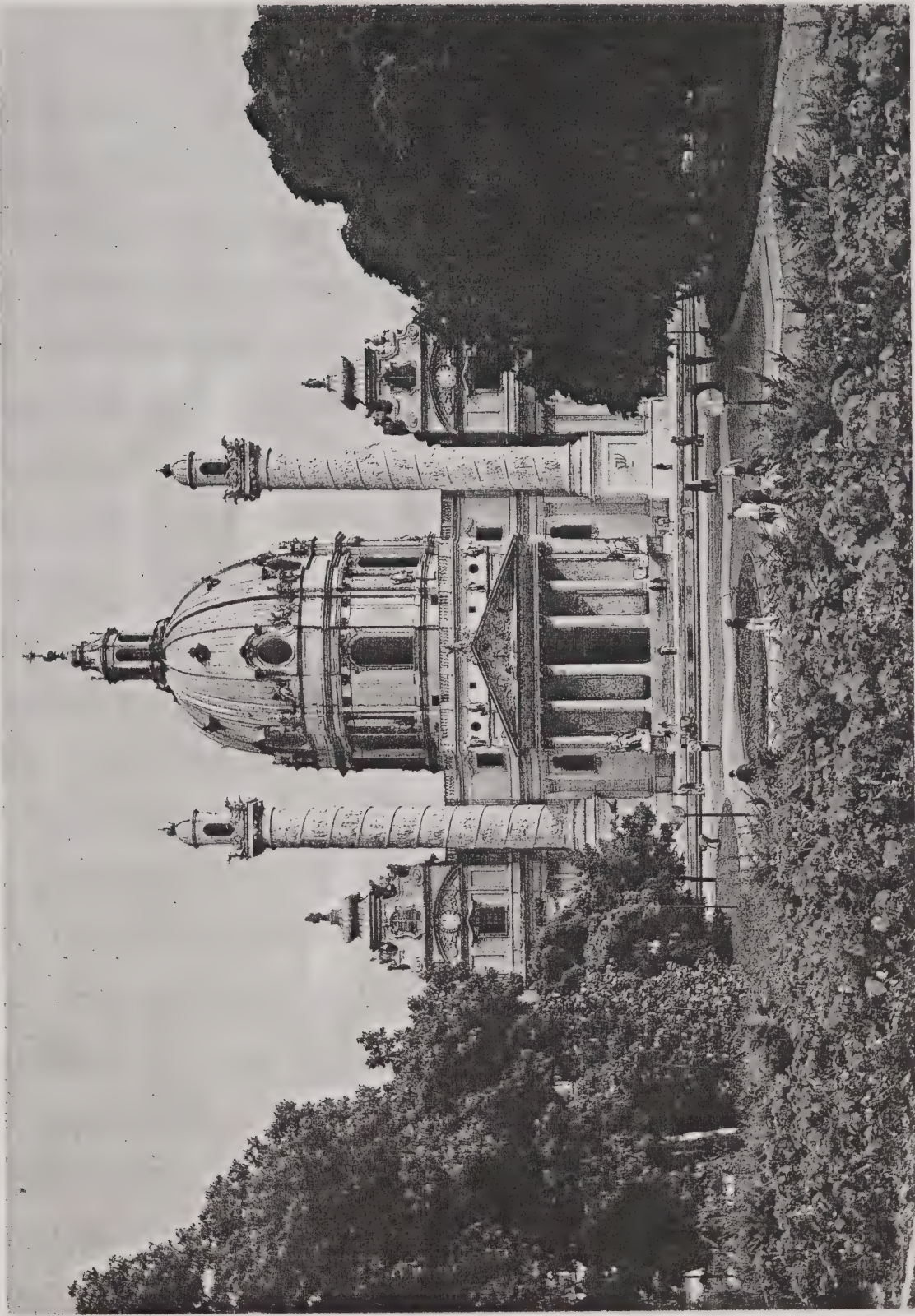
learning to swim, picking mushrooms, blueberries... My parents, my sister and I went on vacation to Velden, in Austria, a small village on a large lake, the Wörthersee. The first days my mother always remained in bed. I was told it's the water, it makes mother sick, but she was a bit neurotic and probably suffered the first days from a nervous stomach. There were nice restaurants along the lake. In its center was Maria Wörth, a small island with a restaurant. Mother, standing in front of it, reading a sign to me: "Juden und Hunden ist der Eintritt verboten" (Jews and Dogs are not permitted). Again I felt perplexed, and frightened.

We had moved to a larger, a seven room apartment in the 4th district. With four rooms in a row and the large connecting double doors open, a Persian runner in each, it gave an increased feeling of space. The salon's wall-paper was light-green silk, the dining room had a raised dark-red velvet pattern. The furniture in the library art-deco, shining black lacquer. I was too young to appreciate all this nor the Rosenthal china, the silver, the crystal glass, the beautiful furniture, the paintings, the pianos, we had two, but I loved the telephone switch-board in our entrance hall -- my favorite piece of "furniture". The fire-place in the hall had a stove with Mica doors I could see the flames and marveled at the phenomenon "glass" being able to withstand the heat. My sister had a room and I had one. The floor of my room was covered with brown linoleum. A low cabinet along one wall stored my toys. In front of the cabinet stood my rocking horse covered with real horse hide.

* * *

VERY FRENCH, VERY CATHOLIC

I shared my room with my governess, mademoiselle Josephine Royer, a middle-aged lady with grayish hair who came from Lyon. She told me I am really too young for her, nevertheless, she taught me to speak French fluently and without accent. My sister and I called Mademoiselle Josephine Royer "*Made*" for short. *Made* was devoted to Napoleon, and referred to him as "mon Napi". She also was very, very, very Catholic. *Made* kept a little altar on the wall opposite my toy cabinet, and next to her bed. The altar consisted of an oval colored picture of Maria adorned by two candles, and topped by a crucifix. Before *Made* my parents had me pray, when going to bed, kneeling by my bedside reciting a little prayer, in German, asking God to watch over me, and my loved ones. *Made* replaced this prayer with a French one I sang: "Bonsoire ma tendre mere, benice vaus enfants..." asking Maria for her blessings. *Made* and I visited many churches of which there is no shortage in Vienna. She had a special saint in each one where we kneeled and I pretended to pray. In the Augustiner church there was a saint whose beard was still growing !? In the Karl's Kirche (photo) the red heart of Jesus embedded in a beautifully made light blue enamel molding was passed along to be kissed by the congregation. I hated it, because, I did not want to kiss it, and let me add, I did not want to be kissed either. I do not know how I acquired this aversion. I was eight. I had joined the boy-scouts, my parents took me to the rail-road station to leave for summer camp. They were standing on the siding and I leaned out the window, but refused to be kissed good-by, whereupon father said matter of factly: "Give my best regards to your wife and children". Mother disliked priests, nuns, and



KARLS KIRCHE VIENNA

churches, but, she never interfered with Made's timid efforts to proselytize me.

Father joined the Freemasons. He and mother gave a big party in honor of father's freemason affiliation: "Loge Mozart". A chef had been hired, and I watched him prepare the food. He created a portrait of Mozart using black Truffles placed artfully on a large fish covered with mayonnaise. Mother was an excellent cook. She knew how to prepare refined food. I loved her sweets: Panamatorte, Malakoff torte, Apfelstrudel, Demmeltortelletten, Profitrolen, Vanilla Kipferln. It was a exciting, and "nerve-racking" helping mother stretching strudel dough. I had to use the back of my hands not to make holes with my fingers. Mother had a beautiful voice, and took singing lessons. I took piano lessons and hated it. However, my sister played well, and I particularly liked her rendition of one of Rachmaninof's etudes. Father had many talents. He did excellent free-hand drawings and kept them in a sketch-book. I used to look at them in awe. He was also a calligraphic artist. When he wrote script it looked as if it were engraved. He also could write mirror script. Father collected, books and paintings. I did not understand the paintings, however, books, that is, the illustrations enraptured me. Father gave me an Emergency Money collection. I was much too young to understand it and its value, nor did I understand the appeal of collecting. The "Notgeld" (emergency money) was printed during the post-world-war-I inflation, not on paper but on very thin wood.

My favorite book the "Ancient Mariner", was bigger than I. Bound in red leather with gold print, the book did not fit into the bookcase and was kept on top of it. It was a chore for me to bring the heavy book down on to the rug, where I indulged in the large engravings. Leaning

against the railing of the boat, the ancient mariner, having killed an Albatross, which was hanging from his neck. The others on the boat dead or dying for lack of drinking water. The copy under the drawings read: "Wasser, Wasser uberall, aber nichts zu trinken". The heavy seas with its gigantic waves toying with the boat, torn sails flapping from its masts. There was another oversized book on top of the bookcase. Goethe's Faust, also bound in red leather with gold print. It was physically and intellectually too heavy for me. I had no such problems with "Struwelpeter" who did not want his hair nor his fingernails cut. Wilhelm Busch' katzenjammer kids: Max und Moritz, the bad boys, feeding chickens with bread morsels connected to each other by a fine string. Of course all the chickens choked on it, flying up and getting entangled into a tree came to be hanging from a branch, all of them laying "quick" an egg: "Und Jede legt noch schnell ein Ei und dann kam der Tod herbei." When tailor Möck had a stomach ache his wife laid him flat on the ironing board and pressed his stomach with a hot iron, Suppen-kaspar, who did not want to eat his soup, and rocked his chair at the dinner table, promptly falling backwards, pulling the tablecloth with everything on it down to the floor. Another of my favorite book was Wilhelm Busch' "Fliegende Blätter". Busch not only wrote caustic verses but illustrated them brilliantly expressing with a few strokes the most complicated movements and situations. A drunk trying to negotiate a straight road which however, appears to him going up, down, side-ways and spinning. What I did not discern, was Busch' hatred of Catholics and Jews. Nevertheless I enjoyed every minute of his scathing humor. The rich fat man celebrating the birth of twins his very young wife had given him. The priest blessing the two little newborn. However, I never noticed that the Priest's face and the twins

faces were identical, making the priest the father. The rich man, meanwhile, gulping a fish-dinner and choking to death on a bone, falling over backwards with his chair, pulling the table-cloth with him. The butler, standing alertly behind him, saving the Champagne bottle from falling and getting drunk on its content. From here on it's getting even worse, just leave it to Wilhelm Busch.

The first two books of Karl May arrived. Father had subscribed to them for me. May (pronounced: my) was a German author of travel and adventure stories, dealing with desert Arabs or American Indians in the wild West. I received two May books a month, Faust and the Ancient Mariner were forgotten, and Karl May's "Old Shatterhand" became my hero. My sister read the books to me and I enthusiastically identified with May to a point where books not written in the first person, as were May's, did not interest me. Jules Verne's, bound in brown linen with gold print, which we received monthly I did not like, but, I loved the illustrations. A meteor being sucked in from space, with the help of a concave mirror, turns out to be pure gold, but, not written in the first person, I dismissed it.

Karl May was my hero, as well as his American-Indian friend Winnetou, who was able to stalk the enemy noiselessly. Old Shatterhand, Karl May himself, who was able to knock out anybody with one well-placed blow to the side of the head, and his Arab side-kick: Hadschi Halef Omar ben Hadschi Abul Abbas, iben hadshi David Algosara were my heroes. These characters dominated my fantasies. Old Shatterhand had an Arabian horse, "Rie". It was the fastest horse on earth. All the rider had to do to either pursue or escape on horseback, was to put his fingers next to its ears and whisper "Rie" and immediately the horse went into over-drive. Nobody, but nobody was

able to catch him. Then there were of course “Die Deutschen Heldensagen”. the Germanic hero legends of Brunhilde, Krimhild, Siegfried, Hagen,. Their “special effects” would have put Hollywood to shame. The “Tarnkappe”, who ever wore it became invisible. Siegfried’s sword, was made of special steel. Siegfried, who after he bathed in the blood of the Dragon he slew, became invulnerable, except in one spot under his left shoulder-blade, where a lime-tree leaf had fallen preventing the dragon’s blood from penetrating Siegfried’s skin. Hagen, the Darth Vader of old, promptly killed Siegfried. Brunhild had disclosed to Hagen Siegfried’s “Achilles’ heel” to protect Siegfried, yes, protect him. I never forgave that dumb woman.

* * *

FIRST RADIO --- 1922

Father brought it -- our first one. We were sitting around the dining-room table, father, mother, my sister and I. The little radio stood in the center and our earphones were attached to it. I became the chief operator. Sliding a knob along the wire spool, and fiddling with a detector, as it was called, I tuned in to Radio Vienna. It was located on the Rosenhügel, in the outskirts of town. If there was no program the tik-tok of a clock could be heard. This adventure climaxed seven years later, when I captured a far, far, far away station, an American one, on a radio I had built. This feat, in turn, was overshadowed, to put it mildly, when 50 years later, in 1982, I was the first American private citizen to pull in Moscow TV loud, clear, and in color. With the help of a talented but flaky inventor I erected a 16 foot satellite dish on a Connecticut hill 1,200 feet above sea-level, a part of our property (photo). I was able to access the eastern horizon, scanning "Gorizont", a Russian satellite in a geo-synchronous orbit. It was located over the west-coast of Africa, orbiting the earth at 22,300 feet. The reception was as good as that of a local TV station.

The State-department, as well as the Russian embassy in Washington DC became interested and wanted to see the results. I gave some of my video-tapes to my flaky inventor-friend to show them to prospective customers. I believe Washington DC was too far west, and not able to access Gorizont because of the curvature of the earth. Later the Harriman Russian Institute at Columbia University in NY installed a similar system on its roof.

Mine was unique. The very first reception was a broadcast of competition wrestling between the USSR and Israel, at a time when we were told that there were no diplomatic relations, only hostility, between

the two countries. I was able to see and hear the lies the Soviets told their people about the western world, and how superior theirs was.

At five I went to school. It was 1923, and the streets were safe. I walked to the school alone, a fifteen minute walk. I was the best in class freehand drawing. To draw in perspective came natural. After school *Made* came to pick me up. We walked to the Belvedere park just a few minutes away. Belvedere means "beautiful view". The Belvedere was an exquisite castle. It had a large reflection pool in a meticulously kept beautiful park. The castle was built at an elevated position commanding a magnificent view of Vienna's sky-line, dominated by the cathedral, the Stephanskirche, with its 370 foot steeple. The Belvedere castle had been built in 1740 by Prinz Eugene who was a field-marshal and a statesman in the service of the Austrian Holy Roman emperor, and made his name as one of the greatest soldiers of his time. Even Napoleon admired him. Prince Eugene's park was perfect to race my two-wheeler downhill at a good clip, of course I was oblivious to my historic environment, because Vienna, steeped in history, had no other kind of environment. I ate the sandwich *Made* brought and after a while we walked home speaking as always, only French.

* * *

JOSEPH HEU

an Austrian sculptor, was father's colleague at the Freemason "Loge Mozart". Heu was known for his larger than life monuments, and sculptures. Some placed along the eaves of the Parliament's roof, one of Vienna's most famous buildings. Father commissioned Heu to sculpt my sister and me. Heu had his studio in a section of the Prater which was rather wild. This enhanced its mysteriousness, as I perceived it. A rather large building painted in Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy Yellow. It had a 25 foot ceiling and large sky-lights. Our maid Rosa took us to the sittings. My sister told me recently that Rosa routinely disappeared with Heu and we were left to our own devices.

I was overwhelmed by Heu's larger than life sculptures. Smaller sculptures standing and lying all over the place. The pungent smell of clay plus the sheer size of the hall, its quietness and echo stimulated and awed me. Exploring, I discovered in a far corner a cabinet containing a skeleton. Unable to resist I touched its right hand. My finger, however, got squeezed in one of the Finger joints. At lightening speed I was back clinging to Rosa's side never ever to come near the closet again. There were four or five more sittings, and the end result was a double bust, life-size, of my sister and me with an absolutely amazing likeness. It was finished in white Carrara marble and stood on a rosewood pedestal in the salon silhouetting against the pastel green silk wallpaper.

In 1938 when Hitler invaded Austria the Gestapo confiscated, that is stole, the sculpture to add it to the loot it took from other Jewish homes intended to be displayed in the Linz art-museum Hitler planned to build there after the war. My sister and I have been searching for Heu's masterpiece in vain. To an inquiry dated June 17, 1977, The response



MY SISTER AUDI SITTING FOR SCULPTOR HELL

of the Austrian government's "Bundesdenkmalamt" was: "Nothing is known about a Joseph Heu sculpture as described. Moreover" they wrote "this sculpture is not mentioned in any of the special encyclopedias for artists and sculptors." But, the facts were these.

The Austrian Government held the stolen Jewish art objects hidden for many years in a basement of the Mauerbach monastery near Vienna. The Austrian Government had received the stolen art objects in 1947 from the US Army who had uncovered them in a salt-mine near Munich. The Austrian Government sat on these Jewish goodies for 50 years, hoping that the owners had died. However, a local Mauerbach newspaper got wind of this "caper" and started publishing what it uncovered. The Austrian government did not like this kind of publicity and in a "gracious" gesture decided to give everything to the Jewish administration in Vienna to be auctioned off by Christie's. I went to this auction in Vienna in 1996, hoping to pick up clues as to the whereabouts of our sculpture, but to no avail. My friend Eberhard von Salisch found Joseph Heu's son. He had returned from England and lived in the outskirts of Vienna. His father, he told us, had married a Jewess, his mother, and moved to London before Hitler took Vienna. But, so far no luck in recovering our property.

There were three big holidays in my life: Christmas, New Year, and my birthday. Of course, I loved the presents. They had to be placed next to my bed so I could see them the moment I woke up in the morning. At Christmas, we decorated a tree, and lit real candles, the sparklers hanging from the branches. I do remember the Friday night dinners with some Jewish traditions at grandmother's. I enjoyed these get-togethers, but, I always felt a lack of warmth —love? Sometimes I just felt like the fifth wheel on a cart, or, as the boy who cost us money. I

was only five when I felt attracted to a woman. She must have been very "old", about twenty or thirty, the mother of a playmate by the name of Klappholz. I remember her beautiful white complexion. her black hair parted in the center and dark big eyes. She never knew, nobody ever knew, but, she was too old for me.

Made had been let go. She had lied about something to my parents. An argument ensued in the entrance hall of our building. I heard her say to father: "Sie haben es in ihrem Blute erraten". To this day I do not know how to interpret her remark. At seven I had a governess I fell in love with. A young Swiss woman, mademoiselle Yvonne Eberly from Neu-Chatell. She knew I was in love with her, everybody knew.

* * *

SUDDENLY WE WERE POOR

Father's patron at the Austrian Lumber company was murdered. While making a telephone call he was shot inside a public telephone booth. Father lost his job and we had to change our apartment for a less expensive one. Returning from a summer vacation everything had been moved to the new place the "Lichtenstein-villa" located at the Böcklinstrasse No: 39 in the 2nd district. The Lichtensteins were a prestigious Austrian aristocratic family. This villa had a mysterious appearance. Gilded around the edges, it was a splendid place. It was situated at the edge of the Prater. Stepping out the house I was able to see, not far away, the giant Ferris-wheel, the Prater's landmark.

Mother took the "decline" of father's fortunes badly. In retrospect I believe our moving to the Lichtenstein villa was an improvement, but, mother conveyed it to me as a shameful occurrence. So ashamed was I of my new home that I never invited any of my buddies up to play. I did not want them to see the "misery" in which we lived. In reality our new home, was, a boy's dream come true. A large garden with big old chestnut trees, that shed their red nuts, some still inside their thick thorny green shell. The air heavy with the scent of rose beds, sword lilies, and Lilac bushes, surrounding the Villa. It had a baroque look with a 15 foot look-out tower topping the roof. On one side it bordered on a well-known Prater thoroughfare the Rustenschacher Alee. It was the home of the WAC club –Austria's foremost soccer club, football was the national sport. Down the thoroughfare was the Parkklub. The tennis club, where my parents used to play tennis when they were "rich". The other side bordered the Institute for the Blind, a villa also surrounded by a garden. The neighbors to the west were the Rosenthals, known for their beautiful china. Our villa had three floors.

At ground-level were what used to be the servants quarters. A sweeping marble staircase, wonderfully cool in summer, a stuffed swan hanging down the center, led up to the main floor consisting of grandiose large empty rooms with precious parquet floors and 12 foot ceilings. On the third, the top floor, were two apartments, one of which was ours. The other belonged to the Gersiks. I don't recall them, but I know that Mr. Gersik worked in film, because I found thousands of feet of old dusty, brittle film in the attic. Our apartment had a large living room with a balcony looking out into the Prater. The balcony was large enough to accommodate a large table and guests. Dinner there was delightful. There were side rooms and one more balcony. It was grand, a enjoyable place. I built a tree-house in one of the many trees, about 20 feet above ground. I shared a little hut with my buddy, the son of a riding instructor, who lived on the ground floor. In the hut we "experimented". Smoking "Film" cigarettes. They sold for one Groschen each. It was rumored that they were made from cigarette butts collected on the streets. Of course we had to check out if it was true that old movie film was a fire hazard. It was. We lit one roll of Mr. Gersik's. It not only went up in flames immediately but we lost in this "experiment" some of our hair including eye-brows. We did other nasty, stupid dangerous things and I am still amazed that nothing serious happened to us. I was eight when I got my first bicycle. My sister, holding the saddle, ran with me down the Rustenschacher allee. teaching me bicycling. With a bicycle the Prater, all of its 2300 acres, became my private reserve. I knew every road, every nook and cranny, sometimes quite a distance from home. Father gave me my first sling-shot, It had a steel fork heavy rubber bands and a leather protection for

the thumb. It was followed soon by an air-gun shooting with great force nasty little colored steel arrows.

* * *

BOY-SCOUTS

I joined the Austrian boy-scouts: Group 61, Column 11. Eight years old, I was unaware that with some exceptions all my colleagues and group-leaders were Jewish. For all practical purposes, the Austrian Boy-scouts, were segregated. One day, somewhere in the Wienerwald, I got a hint. Marching along in our uniforms, suddenly we were pelted with rocks. A group of Christian boy-scouts, the St. George boy scouts had picked us as target to indulge their Jew-hatred. Religion was taught in school. Every class-room had a Crucifix. The few who were Jews separated from the rest to be taught religion in another class. Slowly I learned I was different—I was Jewish, and it was the Jews who killed Christ, or to use Catholic lingo: It was the Jews who put him on the cross.

My sister was an attractive teenager and the boys started to converge. I distinctly remember the first Jazz sounds emanating from her room's gramophone. Cab Calloway's incantation: "Oh you dog, you dirty, dirty dog..." and Sophie Tucker's "gentle" voice, I thought she was a man, intoning "Some of these days..." The year was 1927, I was ten, and I never lost my love for Jazz.

The 1929 depression descended on us with a vengeance. Father tried to find work, however, the depression made it almost impossible. Mother was of no help to him. He was broken in spirit. and found refuge sleeping in the afternoon. He smoked about 10 cigarettes a day using a short cigarette holder. I used to buy for him ten "Khedive" cigarettes at the neighborhood tobacconist. He taught me to blow perfect smoke rings. Father was always well dressed and sported a flower on his lapel and a walking stick with an ivory handle. He finally found a door to door job, selling door-locks .

Mother had a great sense of humor. She also was able to mimic accents. We were sitting in a fancy restaurant: "The Hübner" in the Stadtpark, Vienna's Central Park. A few tables away a woman wore a hideous hat. Mother would walk over to her and in a heavy Russian accent would say: Madam yours is the most beautiful hat, would you tell me where you got it? She, however, lost her humor during the depression, and tried to make some money hand-crafting custom jewelry.

I was farmed out to live with my uncle and aunt Ernst and Liesel Grunfeld. They were kind and gentle, but, I must have bitterly resented the loss of a home, because I wetted my bed. What terrible embarrassment on walking up to see my cousins Paul and Eva with whom I shared the room pointing at the puddle under my bed.

My sister left home too, to live with the Tochs, uncle Julius and aunt Hedi. The Tochs were "rich". They owned an apartment house in the 4th district, and lived on the top floor. Julius was, after Knize, the best tailor in Vienna, a prestigious achievement. He had a modern shop: "Wilhelm am Graben" in the "Trattnerhof" in the center of town.. However, Julius was a miserable man. Very religious, and "generous" – with other people's money. We hated each other. He disliked me because he was afraid I might become a financial burden to him, I was not brought up "religious", nor was I "tall dark and handsome". Edith, he liked. She was attractive.

I was 11 when I was given to understand I should start making money. Uncle Julius wanted me to become a tailor apprentice. Father wanted me to study. I don't know how, but father prevailed, and I was sent to the "Akademisches Gymnasium am Beethoven platz." It was a school, where famous men had graduated, I tended towards the

infamous. I was a lousy student. I was unwilling to do homework. Playing with my buddies, self-gratification, eating milk chocolate, came first. Nevertheless I was the best in class in physics. I took to physics enthusiastically and did not need to study it at home. Except in gymnastics and physics, I failed in most subjects, particularly in Latin, and mathematics. Having failed in Latin and math, I would have had to repeat the second year at the Gymnasium, but we had to move again and I was put into a school nearby, a Realschule, where instead of Latin the language taught was French. Since French was almost my first language I passed the entrance test easily and was admitted at the "Realschule in the 9th district. We, mother and I, had to move again. Since leaving this wonderful place, the Lichtenstein villa, I lived at four different places. This time we moved to the 18th district, in the Scheibenberggasse.

Father had left home, and found a job in Czechoslovakia. I lived with mother. I believe my father sent some money, but there was not enough, and we had to move again.

I was farmed out to live with Grandmother. Paula was a great, and not surprisingly, strong woman, she had raised 10 children. With her lived her daughter Fritzzi, and her son uncle Jula. Fritzzi, blind since childhood, was a most remarkable woman. She spoke three languages fluently. She had a special watch with the glass removed to tell the time with her fingers. She was fluent in Braille, and used a regular typewriter efficiently. Uncle Jula, was tall, cultured, but seemed a bit strange. I found out later, he was homosexual. In 1932 it was still a perversion. Now poor Paula had me too.

At grandmother's, uncle Lolo used to drop in. He was the son of one of Paula's sisters, middle-aged and pleasant. He came by to use the

piano. He wore a crumpled suit. He liked to drink a little and always had a slightly red nose. I enjoyed talking with him. We talked about science, astronomy, and other things. Lolo did not rank high in our family because he was not "successful". In and out of mental institutions, he was probably a manic depressive, a disorder poorly understood in the thirties. I liked Lolo best of all my uncles.

These were difficult years for me, but, membership in the Boy-scouts gave me sustenance. The summer-camps were a great relief. Usually they were in remote places somewhere in the Tyrolean mountains I loved. In 1934 our summer-camp was in Nassereit, Tyrol. The same summer, in June Germany incited the Austrian Nazis to civil war. Egelbert Dollfuss, the chancellor of Austria, was assassinated by the Nazis in a raid on the chancellery. Dressed in Austrian police uniforms they entered the presidential offices shot Dollfuss and let him bleed to death. This was the beginning of the end of an independent Austria.

In the Nassereit camp we used as housing Austrian military tents erected as roof above a 3 foot wooden enclosure. I had brought with me a small three tube radio I built. The power-supply consisted of two parts. A 120V battery the size of a small shoe-box. It powered the vacuum tubes. And a 6 volt wet-cell battery which powered the filaments of the tubes. Between two tall trees about 60 feet above ground, I strung an antenna, the tap leading into my tent. It was getting dark and I postponed connecting the radio up for the next morning. I crawled into my sleeping-bag and fell asleep. A storm, ferocious with driving rain, blinding lightening and deafening thunder claps of an intensity and reverberation only high mountains produce, woke me up. I had felt good in the security of my tent, when I suddenly realized, hey!! the lead from the antenna almost touched my head. I jumped up

with “lightning” speed, out into the storm and pulling on the lead until it brought the antenna crashing down. This ended, for the time being, my “wireless” adventure.

My sister held a job as a dress designer at a very good Vienna fashion-house. She designed their yearly collection, and to buy and get inspirations she traveled for the company once a year to Paris to look at French creations. Her Paris trip coincided with my trip to the Nassereit summer-camp. I said: “Edith, why don’t you come and visit me in my camp on your way to Paris”? She did, but the poor girl ran into trouble, because her young and inexperienced dumb brother never bothered to explain to her how to get to the camp. I told her, just get off in Imst. But to get to the camp she needed to the bus and a taxi. But all I did was wait for her at the camp. She finally arrived. She had taken a bus, there was of course no Taxi, and she borrowed a bicycle. When I saw her come all I could say: “What, you are going on a bicycle to Paris”? Edith brought me a cake mother had baked and I never bothered even to cut it and gobbled it up on the spot.

I advanced to group leader. The evenings when we sat around camp-fires singing German and Austrian folk-songs were memorable. I learned and taught self-reliance – to cope with nature., to find ones way outdoors day or night, to administer first aid, to cook outdoors, tie knots, use the Morse-code, even how to help deliver a baby. The group I was in charge of consisted of 15 boys between 10 and 13. On weekends we walked and camped in the environments of Vienna, the Wienerwald. Studying special maps I had prepared a trip for my boys, and arranged for an excursion / picnic. A 4 hour walk some rest and a train back home. Tired we finally reached the railroad station, which was clearly marked on my map. The station appeared ominously deserted. A

farmer living nearby solved the mystery. We had missed the last train to Vienna by 13 years ! The line had been closed since 1919. My poor boys had to walk home. The next day I got many calls from irate mothers.

* * *

JAMBOREE

I traveled to Gödölle, near Budapest to participate in the 1932 Boy-scout Jamboree. We slept in tents and awoke to the tunes of military music. The Rakoczi March, was broadcast every morning by loudspeakers. Rakoczi was a prince of Transylvania. An early "Freedom fighter", who headed a nearly successful national rising of all Hungary against the Habsburg empire. Getting up was easy. I did not have to shave yet. A friend was not as lucky. I never forgot his face after he scraped off his whiskers. It was a bloody mess. He was bleeding from dozens of cuts all over his face. A bit careless, considering Count Dracula lived next door in Transylvania. I was able to talk with my scout buddies from France, and all others --- if they spoke German. We had parades, competitions, and went sight-seeing to Budapest, and lake Balaton. When it ended, two friends and I continued on a riverboat down the Danube to Belgrade. Disembarking, we walked in our uniforms, black socks with two white stripes over the calf, blue shorts, beige shirt green scarf, large hat, and rucksack down main street, and promptly were shadowed by Yugoslav military police suspecting revolutionaries. They followed us, but soon discovered we were pussy-cats. From Belgrade we took a narrow gage railroad to Sarajevo, high in the mountains. A native, who wore a red fez and introduced himself as "Abdullah" offered to show us the sights. As we walked together he seemed to be walking closer and closer to me. When he put his arm around my waist, I thought at first this was local custom, but soon alarm bells went off. I started to distance myself. Walking by myself I was amazed to discover a city not far from the center of Europe, yet culturally so far removed --- steeped in Islam.

Minarets, veiled women, Muezzin calling the believers five times daily to prayer. We spent the night in a youth-hostel, and next morning proceeded by railroad to Ragusa, renamed Dubrovnik. I had never seen ocean, but, when my train rounded a curve there, suddenly, was the ocean, the Adriatic sea in its full glory, blue, magnificent, endless. Ragusa, picturesque, medieval, a city on the Dalmatian coast a trading center between east and west. We stayed over night. Dubrovnik's sub-tropical climate, my first encounter with "Humidity" made it easy for me to leave. The next day we took a boat to Venice. The sea was rough. The ship was filled with Muslims, all of them seasick, clutching the Koran and vomiting. At the first stop, the Island of Hvar, most passengers got off and we continued to Venice.

To arrive in Venice by boat is a special experience. We had seen Venice far on the horizon, for some time. It was dark, when we arrived, the city was aglow. Hundreds of gondolas festooned with lampoons were surrounding a brightly lit floating stage where actors performed. We did not know what it was all about, but soon found out that it was the evening of the Feast of the Gondolas, a once a year dazzling Venetian extravaganza. How lucky we were, and how young we were.

A few days later we were back in Vienna. When I embraced mother I knew something was wrong. I had picked a bad day to come home. The same morning officials had come by to repossess our furniture. Looking back, I believe, I received little parental guidance, some moral and no spiritual education, most of all I was never able to acquire an ounce of inner security I would have been able to draw on in time of need, and there was time of need ahead. The American comedian Soupy Sales put it succinctly. He said about his wife, "she is a Pretzel",

and explained her psychiatrist meant to say she was twisted. I was twisted twice. The first time, in my formative years. The second time in Auschwitz. These experiences left me "scarred" for life. I acted sometimes strangely. For instance, I received for my photographs and TV commercials many awards, about fifty in all . I threw every single one out. All my negatives I accumulated as photographer over a period of forty years are lost, gone, discarded. I do not know why I did it, or maybe I do not want to know.

* * *

“GIRLS”

At the Gymnasium classes were co-educational. I was 11, but my big problem was my inability to talk with my female class mates. I was just able to stare at them.

The Academic gymnasium was on the Beethoven Platz. In front of my school sat Ludwig in bronze bigger than life. Next to the school was the Eislaufverein. A large artificial ice skating rink. In its center a round area roped off area where couples ice-danced to the tunes of an orchestra seated on a balcony overlooking the rink. How I envied schoolmates dancing with our girls. This inability, to ask a girl for a date, did not improve even later, when I learned dancing.

I was fifteen, Elmayer was Vienna's foremost dancing school. Uncle Julius gave me one of his old suits. All made by hand, he explained, and pulled a seam apart to show the irregularity of hand stitching. Julius had a pointed belly, and was taller, but somehow a neighborhood tailor fitted me into his suit. Filled with fears about my looks, the unwieldy hair, “ugly” freckles, my protruding lip, awkward clothing, and my mother's exhortations : “Kleider machen Leute”, (the importance of clothes), I learned to waltz, to the right and to the left supposed to be more difficult. We also learned step-dancing, and I considered getting metal plates for my shoes.

Mr. Elmayer frowned on dancing with the same partner more than once, and he had to separate me from Gretl over and over. I was crazy about her. She was petite, attractive, had red hair and freckles. I was dying to see her on other than dancing days, but, was unable to communicate this, “bizarre” desire when I danced with her. I got Gretl's telephone number, but did not dare to call her. My blind aunt

Fritzi got her on the phone but, when I took the receiver I did not dare to talk! In 1940 I did meet Gretl in Prague, and we had a passionate love affair. Then Hitler's Hell broke loose, eight o'clock curfews for Jews, arrests, deportations, concentration camps. A friend of mine was arrested by the Gestapo and taken from his stylish home never to be seen again. Probably some Nazi official wanted his apartment, they came for him after midnight. Later we heard he was in Auschwitz, and already in the fall of 1940, I heard rumors that in Auschwitz prisoners were used to study the effects of poison gas. In 1943, after an 18 months incarceration in a hard labor camp I was transferred to Theresienstadt. I arrived one day after Gretl, my dancing school partner had died there of Typhoid. She was twenty-four.

Aunt Hanne, mother's sister was an engaging woman. I liked her, moreover she and her husband Alfred Sommer owned a candy factory in Iglau. I loved to watch how my favorite bonbon "Furree No:3" was produced. What I would call Sugar dough was stretched by an employee over and over from a big wall-hook, then fed into a machine. When the candy came off the assembly line I stuffed myself.

Furree was hard dry candy, and after it softened released its wonderful tasting filling. Of course this was bad for my teeth, which had been neglected for years, because there was no money.

My father never bothered, perhaps intentionally, to change my Czech citizenship to an Austrian. I was a foreigner, and my parents had to pay five times the regular schooling fee. Austria's socialized medicine, available in the large hospitals, treated me like an unwanted child, but they did took care of me.

* * *

FIRST SKIS, 1930

Hanne, my aunt, invited me to join her and her son Eric, my first cousin and a year younger, in Iglaue. It was winter and Hanne offered to buy me a pair of skis. I was thrilled. She sent me to a nearby carpenter who made them. His shop was in a basement where I selected a clear piece of Ash with straight grain. Holding up my arm the carpenter took a measurement from the center of my hand to the floor. Using a cardboard template, he marked two identical pieces and cut them out on a band-saw. He then bent the Skis over a curved piece of iron, heated this contrivance in a fireplace to give the bends permanence. The next morning I brought my "ski-boots" ordinary over the ankle street shoes, and the carpenter mounted them with a Hüttfeld binding to the skis. At home I hammered a little nail into each of my shoe's heels to prevent the leather strap of the binding from slipping off. Skiing has remained my favorite sport.

My talents were technical. I had good manual dexterity, and had built radios. I loved machines. I collected old broken machinery. I was excellent in drawing. In 1932 I was enrolled in a well-known Vienna college, the "T.G.M", in the Währinger Street for a five year study of electrical engineering. After graduation I was to be a "Herr Ingenieur". Titles are of great importance in Austria. To be a Herr Doctor, Herr Hofrat, Herr Ingenieur, Herr Geheimrat, Herr Regierungsrat, epitomized achievement. After graduation I would be a Konstrukteur, a "designer-draftsman". As the title implies drawing played a major role. It is said that drawing is the language of the engineer. Since drawing was my forte I was good in many subjects, but altogether I still remained a lousy student, still unwilling to do my home work. I had moved from

Grandmother's and lived now in a furnished room not far from my school. My sister had married Ernst Deutsch, a very handsome young man, well traveled, he had spent time in South-America, spoke French and English and drove a Studebaker. Needless to say, I was in awe. Moreover, he bought me a bicycle, the most beautiful racing-bike. It had special tires, special spikes, extra thin, to save weight, wood rims, and it was feather light. Even standing still, it looked fast.

Ernst and Edith lived on the Passauer place across from the Church "Maria am Gestaade", the oldest Church in Vienna. It was in the 1st district a very good and quiet section of town. Mother lived with them. As any mother-in-law she was critical of her son in Law. They had a maid, young, pretty, very blond. We flirted. She told me her boyfriend, a son of Sigmund Freud, lived near by. I did not care where he lived as long as she came to visit me. I also lived near by, in the 9th district. She did.

1932, Nazi and Communist terrorism, left the people wholly insecure. Assassinations, , uprisings, inflation created chaos, which, more than anything else, paved the way for Hitler's take-over. People craved Law and Order, Hitler promised it and he gave them what they wanted.

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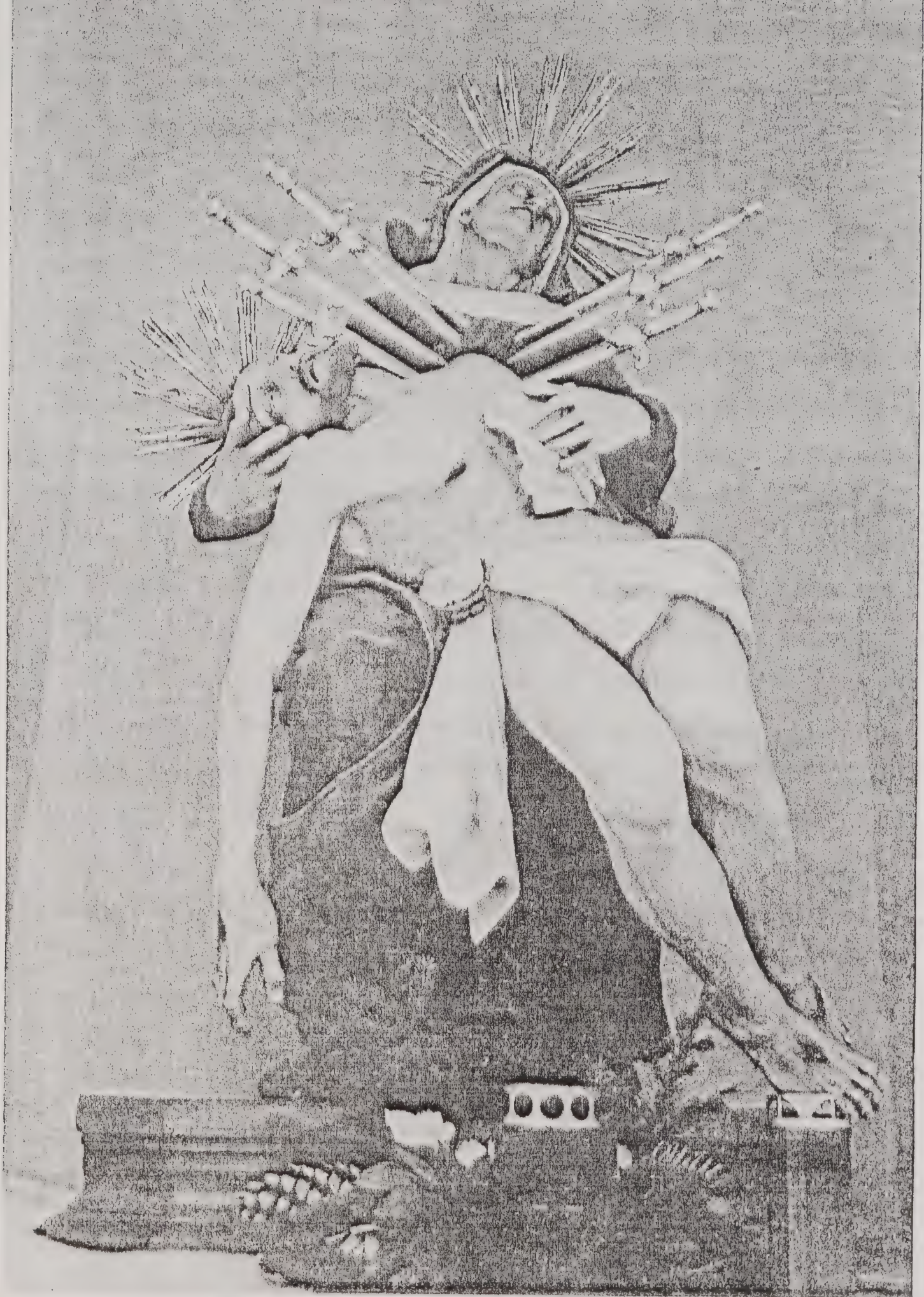
MY FELLOW AUSTRIANS

In their Catholic churches my fellow Austrians learned to hold me, my relatives, and the rest of the Jews in low esteem, more accurately, in contempt. We belonged to the people "who put Him on the cross".(photo) The Catholic teachings of contempt and hatred of the Jew are being particularly accentuated in Austrian Catholicism, more than in Catholicism practiced anywhere else. It is being said that Austrian children imbibe Jew-hatred with their mother's milk.

Adolf Hitler was exposed to these teachings of contempt in his formative years. He was an altar boy and choir boy at the Lambach Benedictine church. He attended Catholic school at the Lambach Benedictine cloisters.

To illustrate the depth of Jew-hatred pervading young Hitler's times, here is what Jesuit Father Rodina, wrote in "The Voice Of Truth" La Voce de la Verita in 1896, when Hitler was seven: "Jews do not work, but profit from the works of others", and he wrote "The barbaric practices of the Jews, the ritual murder, has been ascertained as fact", that is, killing Christian children, and using their blood to prepare matzoth. It was young Hitler's conviction, at 16, that the Jews continued to perform ritual murder and he told Kubizek, his childhood friend, on passing the Linz synagogue in the Bethlehemstrasse: "That does not belong here in Linz".

I am convinced that without these teachings Hitler could not have hated the Jews to the point of killing them, or as he wrote in Mein Kampf: "By defending myself against the Jew I was fighting for the work of the Lord". It should be understood that young Hitler's Jew hatred



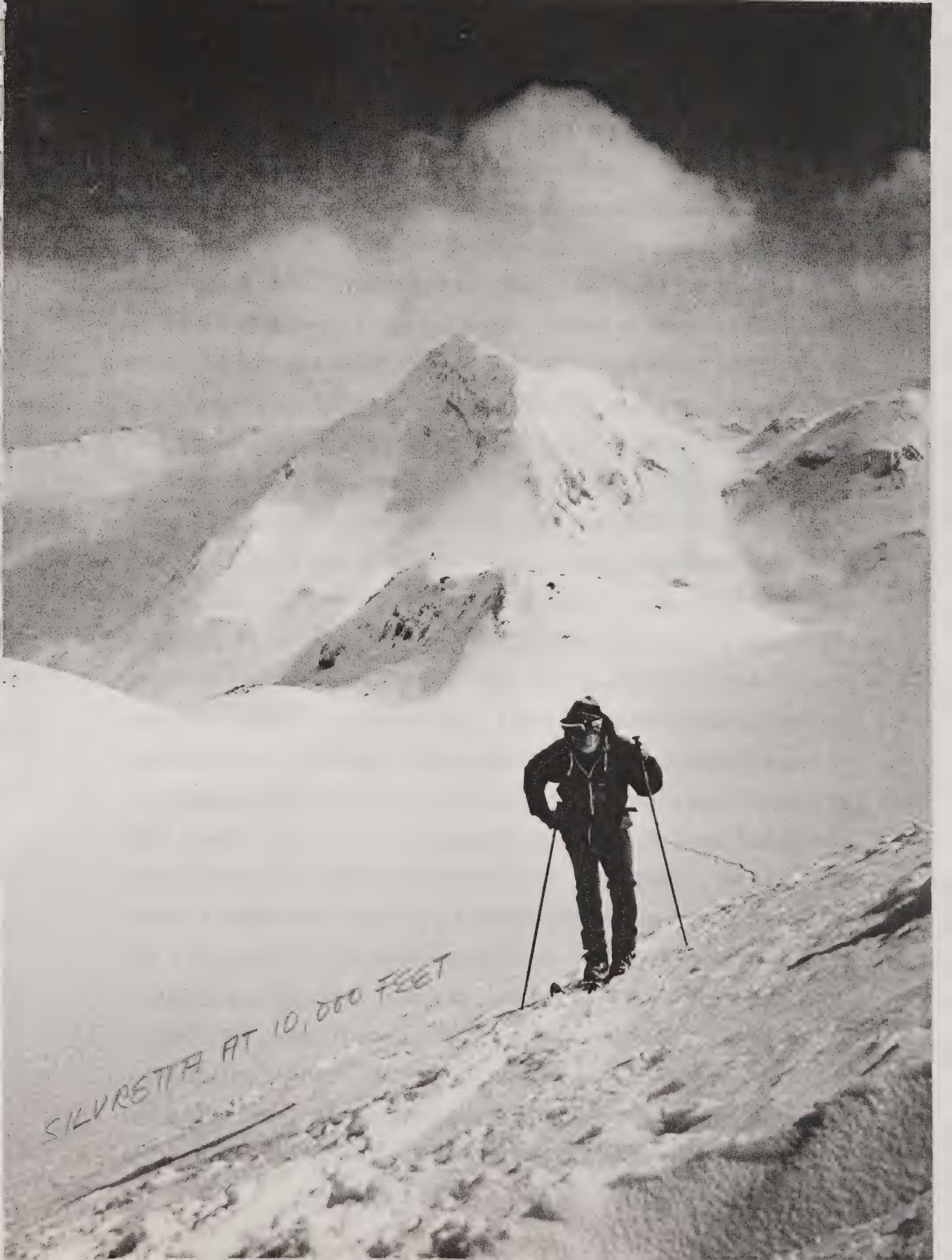
The Venkateswara Temple, Tirumala

was not yet racist, but based entirely on the stereotypical Jew as he evolved from the Catholic teachings of contempt of the Jews.

Hitler's Jew hating National-Socialism made great inroads in Austria who's population had been conditioned for centuries to hate the Jews.

In The first year of College at the T.G.M. we were 42 in class, 21 Jews, 21 non-Jews. The high proportion of Jews was due to an eagerness of Jews not to study academic sciences, law or medicine because, National-Socialist propaganda had agitated against "Die Verjudung" the Judaisation of these professions. In Casablanca January 1943, the Nazis found unexpected support. President Roosevelt contemplating with Churchill post war Germany, advocated a quota for the number of Jews permitted to practice law and medicine. This, he argued, should lessen the justified complaints Germans bore against Jews! This revered "benefactor" of American Jews had a bias of his own, which surfaced repeatedly during the Holocaust.

After five years of study , in 1937, our class had shrunk to 20 students, Kurt Gehlmann and I were the only Jews left in class. Kurt was intelligent, a brilliant pupil. Somehow, I graduated too, and do not know how I did it. At the time it was rumored, bad grading of Jews resulted from teacher's anti-Semitism, but I don't think so. That is not to say there was no anti-Semitism in class. We had Ludwiczek, the first to appear with a Swastika badge in his button hole. I could feel his seething hatred, and It never left him. When I met him fifty years and a Holocaust later, at our class reunion in 1987 in Vienna, he said to me: "Do you remember paying me five Schilling to make you a drawing so you could pass an exam"? He continued: "I discussed it with my professor, and he told me "Jews can't draw, they can use help". I pointed out to him, why on earth would I ask him to draw for me since I



SILVRETTA AT 10,000 FEET

was the best in drawing. He shot back: "You were not, Haslinger was! At the 1997 reunion Ludwiczek did not show up. He walks now on crutches, I was told, and did not want to be seen.

I do remember Haslinger. I think he may have been or became a Nazi, but I liked him. The Jew Einstein was in the news. We argued about his theory of relativity. Afterwards, I wrote on the blackboard in big letters: "Haslinger believes Einstein's theory of Relativity is a Jewish invention to poison Aryan minds". When the professor walked in he read my pronouncement. Who wrote this? I raised my hand, and he said: "Wipe it off", and the matter was closed. I believe Haslinger, as did many of my schoolmates, died fighting for the 1,000 year Reich. I had another, curious encounter at the 1987 class reunion.

March 15 1939 was a cold, gray day in Zlin, Czechoslovakia, the factory town of the Bata comp. The world's largest shoe factory employing 35,000 workers. I worked at Bata's engineering department designing electrical transformers. The factory was closed, the German occupiers were to arrive shortly. I just had seen a movie with my favorite actress Madeleine Carroll, and stood near the movie theater on main street in Zlin. They came in rows of 10 walking in step down zlin's main street. No drums, no music, no cheering, no flags, just silence interrupted by the staccato of their heels. Suddenly I spotted Paul Novak, a schoolmate, marching at the far end of a row of 10. I ran after him. Pointing at the "Spolecensky dum", an 11 story modern hotel up on an incline and shouted: Novak come and visit, I live there, room 1014. He came the same afternoon. Why did you invade us? To keep law and order, he answered, looking down, adding, that's what we were told. I forgot the rest of our conversation. When we met again fifty years later at the 1987 reunion I said, remember, Novak, when I saw you last? He

responded with a blank stare. I continued, marching into Zlin with the German Army ! Without batting an eyelash he said: "I never was in the Army"!?.

I liked Ernst Heller's dry sense of humor, a schoolmate. We shared a love for skiing. He lived in the 8th district and I had met his parents. In 1936 we went skiing to the Silvretta, a mountain range where Austria and Switzerland meet. The highest peak, the Fluchthorn is 10,500 feet. I learned to love the majestic magnificence of these mountains. (photo) the quietness, the beauty of the pristine high-alpine landscape. Untouched, there were no tracks in the snow, except your own. We had traveled the whole night by "Personenzug", a very slow train, but right for our limited budget. We had clothes and food: Salami, Speck, canned food, in our Rucksack and arrived at Ischgl in Tyrol in the afternoon 15 hours after leaving Vienna. We immediately continued on to our destination, the Heidelberger Hütte, 6,200 feet above sea-level. It was getting dark, but the mountain road packed with hard snow was easy to follow. We carried our skis, poles, and 50 pound rucksack. After four hours we finally, and thankfully saw the electric light over the entrance of the Heidelberger Hütte. Another hour and we arrived more dead than alive. The combination of thin air, heavy Rucksack, and the strain of having traveled all night took its toll. But, we were young, nineteen, and the next morning we were ready to ski. In Vienna I had tried to join the "Austrian Alpenverein". Membership provided lower rates at the Heidelberger Hütte. No dice. Jews were not admitted. The next morning we studied our special map, and picked a peak to climb. I forgot its name. It was located right on the border and was over 10,000 feet . We put furs on the skis, attached our bright red Lawinenschnur, avalanche-cord, because the map advised it ,and took off.

After 4 hours climbing, about 200 feet below the peak we had to take the skis off, anchored them into the snow and tracked along the rim, packed hard snow, to the summit, carefully avoiding its left edge and overhang of windblown ice and snow. On the top we entered our names into the book, and indulged in the magnificent view. Straight ahead Switzerland (Klosters), to the left Italy, to the right Vorarlberg. The sky blue almost black. Exhilarating moments.

Skiing down we came across somebody else's tracks. I followed them down – what he can do I can do, right? Wrong! Following these tracks my speed increased, faster and faster, I fell head first into the deep powder. It took me some time to recover. When I got to the Hütte I discovered who's tracks I tried to follow. They belonged to a member of the Austrian border-patrol. The next day taking a similar route I had an opportunity to study my fall. My tracks came to an abrupt end, and there in the snow was a large "Badewanne", a bath-tub as we called it. A big depression in the snow. But, this was not all. About 40 feet downhill was another bath-tub. I had sailed 40 feet through the air.

Fifty years later, in 1987, I retraced my Silvretta "steps" with my friends Addie and Ted. My wife Alice, born and raised in the Arizona desert does not care for cold and snow stayed in the hotel in Ischgl, a village at the entrance to the Silvretta mountains. I was happy to find the mountains still untouched, majestic, undeveloped. Even Helicopter skiing is verboten.

In between, many, sometimes not so gentle hints, that I will never amount to anything, finally in 1937, after graduating from the T.G.M. came my moment of truth – to prove myself, and make money, money, money... , something "dear" Uncle Julius wanted me to do nine years earlier as a tailor apprentice. The job-market in Austria was difficult,

however, within a few months I found a job as “Konstrukteur” (Designer-draftsman) at Bata comp

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180,000 PAIR OF SHOES A DAY

The Bata Company, in Zlin Czechoslovakia, a few hundred kilometers from Vienna, was an unusual company, and Zlin an unusual town. Bata employed 35,000 workers, 100,000 world-wide, and used the assembly line method to produce 180,000 pair of shoes a day. Bata also produced Auto tires, electric motors, transformers, artificial rubber, and the world's foremost aerobatics air plane the Zlin-XII, a twin tandem seater low-wing plane. The airport was in nearby Otrokovice connected by a super four-lane highway to downtown Zlin. Tomas Bata was an innovator, entrepreneur who got some of his inspirations from Henry Ford.

Tomas Bata owned a twin Lockheed with which he had flown around the world. His pilot was my flying teacher. During lunch breaks my friend Karel Ludwig and I, used to jump into a cab, rush to the airport, and put in an hour of flying. Karel photographed for the company. He was very gifted. He inspired me, and I took up photography too. Karel Ludwig became one of Czechoslovakia's great photographers.

Karel was of medium height, blond, blue-eyed, but not Germanic, more Slavic looking. He was bilingual German/Czech, and spoke some English. We lived in the company's international Hotel, the "Spolecenski dum". Karel and I had rooms on the top floor, the 10th. We had a commanding view of the factory, and with 10 stories (1937) the hotel was very high for European standards. The Otis elevator company came from the States to install the elevators. In the Hotel's reading room the latest American magazines were laid out on a large table. Karel liked Hurrell's photos of Hollywood stars, which appeared regularly in Esquire. On the second floor was a café where coffee and American drinks, ice-cream-sodas, were served. In the evenings one could

dance to the tunes of a fairly good Jazz orchestra. And the restaurant on the roof had a great view. Kurt Hendriks was another friend who lived also on the 10 floor of the Hotel. He was a tourist guide for Bata fluent in German, Czech and English, who guided visitors through the factory. but, he was also a Lady's man and if one of the tourists was a good-looking he could not resist disappearing with her, leaving the rest of the visitors stranded.

One day he ask me: "Mother is coming from Prague to visit, would it be all right for me to sleep one night on the couch in your room?" Of course it would be. His mother came, but she brought along a young lover to spend the night in her son's room. So?? Kurt later sold his father the evidence for divorce proceedings against his wife – Kurt's mother. That was depraved in 1937. It may still be depraved today !?

The factory's main-gate was a five minutes walk from the hotel. I punched in at eight am. and took the factory trolley to my building No: 123. Either sitting at my desk or standing in front at the almost vertically tilted large drafting table I worked on various, projects. One of the more interesting project involved the just finished administration building. It was made of steel, concrete, and glass, 15 stories high, about 100 feet deep and 500 feet long. Very modern, all inside partitions were glass. The first room on one end was the boss's office, but it was also an elevator! Yes, an elevator. Bata was able to press a button on his desk marked for instance "Import", and his "office" moved to the floor of the Import department. From his desk he was then able to survey the glass partitioned department. Quite impressive in 1938. Czech engineering was impressive too. The Tatra company produced a car which was far ahead of it's time. A streamlined car with air-intakes for the rear air-

cooled 8 cylinder engine. It was an outstanding automobile, of course a collector's item today.

The pay I received was higher than I had expected. I did not speak a word of Czech, but my immediate superior, Ing. Zaboï, spoke German, so did my colleagues Ing. Lipovsky, Ing. Niederle, and Ing. Guida, who became friends. My buddy Konopka, however, spoke only Czech. Nevertheless we went skiing to the Beskide mountains together. Our conversation was limited, but I learned Czech and Konopka German and soon we could talk. As far as I know I was the only Jew in the electro-technical department. I never knew any other Jews in Zlin, or at the Company, and it was of no interest to me. I am sure there were some, but they worked mostly in Export, Import, and Sales.

On weekends I went by train to Prague to visit my parents. Returning, I took the sleeping car, a special car reserved for the Bata comp. I boarded it in Prague, on the Wilson station in late evening, and woke up the next morning in Zlin. The sleeping car was parked on a side-track only a few minutes from the main factory gate. Very convenient, very expensive.

Father worked now for MGM in Prague and lived with mother in the center of town in a small but modern apartment house. They lived quite well and were content. Life for Jews in Austria, however, had become precarious. Marauding Brown-shirt hordes intimidated Jews. Graffiti predicted "Die Nacht Der Langen Messer" "The Night Of The Long Knives", when Jewish blood will drip from the blades". Slogans proclaimed "The Jews are our misfortune" "Judah verrecke" "Jews Croak!" It seems they did not like us.

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“HEIL HITLER”

On March 12, 1938 German troops, accompanied by Hitler himself entered Austria, and had a triumphal reception. A Nazi government in Austria, headed by Arthur Seyss-Inquart, was established and collaborated with Hitler in proclaiming the “merger” on March 13, 1938.

My sister and her husband were trapped in Vienna, but were able to secure American visas and left for the United States in the summer of 1938. I went to Paris by train to say goodbye. I had never been to Paris, but, not in the mood for sight-seeing I returned to Zlin. I remember very few details of this emotional trip.

Will Czechoslovakia be next? While my fellow-Czechs proclaimed: “Czechoslovakia is not Austria !” I felt that the only way out of this death-trap for Jews was emigration. But in Zlin I was far removed from foreign Consulates, the stepping-stone to freedom. Uncle Edmund, father’s brother in Chicago, tried to get a visa, for my parents, and father spent many hours on the American consulate in Prague to no avail. Little did he know, that President Roosevelt’s State-department willfully kept the visa distribution lower than necessary. Roosevelt had put men in charge of the State Department who ,were rabid Jew haters.

R.Borden Reams, the State Department’s “specialist” on Jewish affairs, as late as December 1942, when 2½ million Jews had already been killed, was still telling people that reports of mass murders were “to the best of his knowledge as yet unconfirmed”. It was men like Reams who really decided which Jews should live, and which should die. Moreover, the State department consistently kept the visa distribution lower than the allotted meager quota.

The following confirms the State Department's bias: Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, after he learned that the State Department had hidden from him a cable from the U.S. Legation in Switzerland confirming Hitler's genocide of the Jews, accused Roosevelt-appointed Breckinridge Long, the State Department's man in charge of European Affairs, of being an anti-Semite. Morgenthau filed a critique of the State Department stating in the strongest terms: "Report to the Secretary on the acquiescence of this Government in the Murder of the Jews. " The report charged that the State Department was guilty of a willful failure to act to rescue Jews from Hitler.

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BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION ?

Martin Luther's birthday was November 10, 1483. In his thesis: "On the Jews and their lies" Luther detailed in Seven Points on how to deal with the Jews. His first point advocated to burning down the Jew's synagogues. His last point was, to drive them out of the country like "mad dogs." Hitler followed Luther's recommendations except the last point, he modified. Instead of driving the Jews out of the country "like mad dogs", he killed them.

The night preceding Luther's birthday on the 10th of November 1938, Hitler's hordes implemented Luther's first point and burned down 177 synagogues in Germany and Austria. It was the infamous "Kristallnacht". The pretext was the assassination of Ernst vom Rath in Paris, by Herschel Grynzpan. This pogrom was well reported, however, Luther's role is never mentioned. Needless to say Luther's thesis gave moral support to Hitler and his henchmen. As a matter of fact Julius Streicher, the editor of the "Sturmer" an anti-Jewish hate sheet with pornographic overtones, used as his only defense in Nuremberg Luther's pronouncements. He was hanged.

Austria's Anschluss had outflanked the next state on Hitler's list, which was Czechoslovakia. He hated the "Tschechei", as he called it. Hitler again made use of "national self-determination" to confuse the issue. 3 ½ million German-speaking Czechs, inhabited the Czech borderlands in the Sudeten Mountains. Hitler denounced the Czechs for alleged persecution of this German minority, and on April 21 he ordered General Keitel, his chief of staff, to prepare for the invasion of Czechoslovakia. What followed was the well-known sequence of, actions by our feckless, unprincipled, parsimonious, spineless, "Allies", leading up to the "Munich" sell-out. All this proving again that diplomatic

III

Von den Juden und ihren Lügen.

Mart. Luth. D.

Ich hatte mir wohl vorgenommen, nichts mehr, weder von den Juden noch wider die Juden zu schreiben. Aber weil ich erfahren, daß die elenden, heillosen Leute nicht aufhören, auch uns, das ist die Christen, an sich zu locken, hab' ich dies Büchlein lassen ausgehen, damit ich unter denen erfunden werde, die solchem giftigen Vornehmen der Juden Widerstand getan und die Christen gewarnet haben, sich vor den Juden zu hüten. Ich hätte nicht gemeint, daß ein Christ sollte von den Juden sich lassen narren, in ihr Elend und Jammer zu treten. Aber der Teufel ist der Welt Gott, und wo Gottes Wort nicht ist, hat er gut machen, nicht allein bei den Schwachen, sondern auch bei den Starken. Gott helfe uns, Amen.

Gnade und Friede im HErrn. Lieber Herr und guter Freund, ich habe eine Schrift empfangen, darinnen ein Jude mit einem Christen ein Gespräch hat, der sich unterstehet, die Sprüche der Schrift (so wir anführen für unsern Glauben, von unserm HErrn Christo und Maria, seiner Mutter) zu verkehren und weit anders zu deuten, damit er meineth, unsers Glaubens Grund umzustossen.

Darauf gebe ich euch und ihm diese Antwort. Es ist mein Vorhaben nicht, daß ich wolle mit den Juden zanken oder von ihnen lernen, wie sie die Schrift deuten oder verstehen, ich weiß das alles vorher wohl. Viel weniger gebe ich damit um, daß ich die Juden bekehren wolle, denn das ist unmöglich. Und die zween trefflichen Männer, Lyra und Burgensis, haben uns vor hundert und vor zweihundert Jahren neben andern mehr der Juden unflätiges Deuten treulich beschrieben und fürwahr statlich widerlegt. Dennoch bilst's bei den Juden garnichts und sind immer für und für ärger geworden.

agreements, as a rule, are not worth the paper they are written on, unless backed up by military power. Germany's military power late 1938 was exaggerated, but, Czech military power was substantial. Czech armament was sophisticated. It was equal if not better than that of the Germans, not to mention the Czech border fortifications, in the Sudeten. There were none on the German side. A war at this border would not have been a "Blitzkrieg", something Hitler did not want to risk, because, the German people were not ready to fight for the "Sudetendeutsche", and the German generals felt they needed more time. But Hitler did not share the German's dislike for war. He loved war and started the ball rolling with his incendiary speech, which began:

"Es ist eine unerhörte Lüge wenn Herr Eduard Benesch behauptet dass Deutsche Truppen an der Tschechischen Grenze konzentriert wären..." It is an incredible lie when Herr Eduard Benesch asserts that German troops are concentrated on the Czech border..."

I listened to this speech. brilliantly delivered, it was chilling. The Czechs, however, resisted handing over their border fortifications to Hitler until September 21, when the British and French made it clear that they would not fight for the Sudetenland. The Czechs, fully mobilized, and Chamberlain returned home to make an incredible observation particularly for a British Prime Minister. It revealed his total ignorance of geo-politics:

"How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas masks here because of a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing."

On March 16, 1938 German units occupied Prague, and Czechoslovakia ceased to exist. What was left of Czechoslovakia was a part of Bohemia and Moravia.

Shortly before the German take-over of the Bata company, the boss Bata Jr. and his family fled in their twin engine Lockheed to Toronto Canada where they owned large factories. I was 22, not at all sure of my value to the company, never thought to ask them for help. It never occurred to me to ask for a transfer abroad, furthermore I do not think I would have just left my parents in Prague. In hind-sight however, it seems quite possible that the company may have helped them too. At this point not much had really changed in Zlin. True, the airport was shut down, my flying teacher had left, piloting the boss to Canada, but I continued to work, as I had before the German take-over. I still lived at the International Hotel. But, when my friend and colleague Ing. Lipovsky came to the office in a brand-new Nazi uniform of the SA variety, brown riding pants, shiny black boots, black leather belt with Swastika buckle, black shoulder strap, and on his head a brown and beige regulation cap with black visor, it took me by surprise, chiefly because I knew he was a cynic, and I knew what he thought of Hitler. Lipovsky appeared changed, but he said to me: "Think nothing of it, and insisted on walking home with me, as we had done daily.

I wanted to see my parents in Prague, but the railroad connection to Prague was cut by a German occupation zone. However, the airline was working. I took a Junkers 52, a three engine corrugated metal air plane to Prague. The plane was filled and I sat on one of the folding chairs set up in the aisle. Father still held his job at MGM. But we were trapped, and we knew we were facing a cataclysm.

I considered. escaping over a border I knew well to Switzerland. Or to nearby Slovakia, or Hungary, risking probable arrest on the long trip to the border, or on the border, or in the respective countries who probably would have welcomed us with open --- hand-cuffs. Arrest

meant deportation to a KZ, which meant death. Father, as well as I, still held jobs. Maybe the US visa may come through? Edmund, Ernst, and sister Edith worked to get us out.

I returned to my job in Zlin. One of the waiters at the Hotel, underlined in red pencil all anti-Jewish remarks, of which there were many now, in magazines and newspapers, he then offered them to the guests. However, I did not experience direct hostility,. My relations with my friend Karel Ludwig and my colleagues in the office were unchanged. There were no German uniforms to be seen anywhere. We knew that the management of the company was now controlled by Germans, but work continued as before.

The news continued to be depressing. Hitler's successes were astounding, and his approval rating, our media's gimmick, would have ascertained that his was 99.9 percent. France, England, and other countries stood up to Hitler as a rabbit stands up to a poisonous snake. Hácha, the Czech president supposedly operated with limited rights. That was laughable --- Hacha had no rights, zilch!!

* * *

THE LAST JEW

At the end of November 1939 I was called to see Bata's head of personal. He was a "big-shot", he handled 35,000 employees. "Pane engineer", he addressed me: "I am terribly sorry to have to tell you this, but, I was ordered by the Gestapo to let you go, because you are Jewish". I believe I was the last Jew in the factory. I found out later that Bata had all its Jews transferred abroad. Obviously they overlooked me, a fatal mistake. I should say my fatal mistake for not making waves. I had been with the company 2½ years. I returned to my office, packed up my drafting tools and said goodbye to my co-workers. Lipovsky, Zaboi, Guida, Konopka, and Ing. Niederle, who gave me his telephone number in Prague and said: Be sure to call me. Let's have dinner.

I quit my Hotel and moved to Prague to stay with my parents. There had not been much change in Zlin, but, the Prague I now moved to was totally different from the one I had known. After the out-break of World War, which started with the invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, life for Jews had changed dramatically. It became fearful. The sword of Damocles did not just hang above our head, it was now touching it. Compared to Zlin, where I seemed to have been the only, though forgotten Jew, Prague was depressing. I had to learn to live in crowded quarters, I slept on the kitchen floor of my parents small apartment. I had to live with an eight o'clock curfew, riding the segregated tramways. Jews were permitted to ride in the second car. There were a few restaurants for Jews only, one night-club. The food-stamps were marked with a large "J", and we had to wear a yellow star sewn to our coats. There were many more restrictions, which did not

affect me. I was lucky, I did not own anything, had no bank account, etc. I found two friends, Eberhard Marx, a German graphic artist, a half Jew, and Hans Schwartzkopf, a Czech Jew and artist, With them I shared a room they sublet from an elderly Jewish couple in the center of Prague. Father had lost his job too because MGM had closed-up shop in Prague. MGM never offered to help father. Nevertheless It was amazing how we tried to cope with adversity to make the best of it. My father, to prepare himself for the uncertain future, learned to repair watches and clocks. Mother was very silent, just trying to face the inevitable.

I ignored the 8 O'clock curfew, and walked home at night after visiting friends. There was a total black-out, and the streets were deserted. Until one night I was stopped by a drunken German civilian. I could not see him nor could he really see me,. He called for police. I did not run because he was armed. Czech police came and I decided to run for my life when the moment was right. Because of my German accent I did not say one word. The police told the German that there was no reason to arrest me, and I just walked off into the darkness. It was a close call and I decided not to risk my life again.

I joined the "dance on the volcano". The one and only night-club featured Kurt Meier on the piano, and Otto Sattler with his violin. They were professional entertainers.

I met Lilo. Her mother was Christian, her father a Jew. She was barely fifteen. We traveled together to the countryside visiting her grandmother. She was a simple peasant woman who kept two chickens and a goose in the kitchen. Who ever heard of a house-broken goose nor for that matter chickens? Ditta, Lilo's friend joined us from Prag. There was no curfew. We stayed for about a week.

THE HOUSE OF SELIG

Bankhaus Selig was a well-known Prag bank. The Selig's two sons, Wolf and Hans, were Jazz aficionados. Hans played the clarinet, Wolf, the saxophone, Franta Goldsmith the guitar, Jirka Taussig the Trombone. (In normal times Jirka was the goalie of the "Czech Jungmanschaft soccer team. They played internationally). Vrba on the drums, Taube piano, Langer saxophone. and last but not least the most talented of them all, Fritzek Weiss, on the clarinet.

His playing, and I do not say this lightly, was equal to that of Benny Goodman, and he even looked a bit like him. They all made great music. I loved Jazz and did not want to miss a session. Artie Shaw, Benny Goodman, Glen Miller, and many more were our heroes.

Hans Selig was also a photographer. He was quite handsome, blond and blue-eyed like his mother, who was a beautiful woman. Hans and his girl Senta, petite, sexy, about 15, had 13 eyelashes on the left, and 15 on her right eye, I know it from retouching her photos. Senta and Honsa were inseparable love-birds, and we became close friends. We photographed together and I shared Honsa's darkroom. All of the Seligs perished in the Holocaust, Wolf, Hans, and his parents. Many of the other Jazz aficionados, young and in their prime, survived, except Fritzek Weiss who committed "suicide" in front of me. Senta emigrated to Australia, where she died at 70. She never lost her sense of humor calling her specialist treating her for Lymphoma, my "lymphomaniac". Jirka emigrated to the States, so did Franta. I often pondered the Selig's fate. They had the potential to survive— money, lots of money, however, fate did not want them to.

After September 1, 1939, the invasion of Poland, no exit permissions were given to Jews. My uncle Ernst Grunfeld, the oldest son, and his wife Liesel were called up into a transport to be, as the SS called it, “resettled” in the east. My parents and I saw them off. Ernst carried a rucksack and Liesel two bags. We never saw them again.

Grandmother Paula Grunfeld, my blind aunt Fritz, and aunt Hanne and her man lived in a modern apartment in the outskirts of Prag. We often visited and had tea or coffee and cake. Another uncle, Oskar Loeb, his wife and his two sons lived in Prag too. Oskar’s business, men’s underwear manufacturing, was taken away from him, or as they called it “aryanized”, made Aryan. So was Hanne’s candy factory in Iglau. The Czech population, some of them recipients of Jewish property, stood passively by. There was really not much else they could do.

One day I called Ing. Niederle my colleague from Bata. As promised he invited me for dinner. He lived in a good section of town in a very attractive apartment. After dinner it suddenly dawned on me. The apartment must have belonged to deported Jews. I do not think Niederle gave it much thought, but I left without saying goodbye.

Two organizations handled the deportation of the Czech Jews. The Jewish city administration (Judische Kultusgemeinde), and the Gestapo. I recall vaguely receiving a summons to appear at the Gestapo. I do not recall what it was all about. We stood lined up in a courtyard of the Gestapo mansion in the outskirts of Prague. I remember a little man, Adolf Eichmann, addressing us. Behind me stood a 6 foot fellow Jew, when suddenly Eichmann stepped in front of me, and pushing me aside stepped up to the tall Jew behind me and hit him hard in the face for no apparent reason. I believe Eichmann, being little, just seemed to hate tall Jews.

On May 7, 1941 the news was different. Nothing about Germany's victorious Blitzkrieg, but Rudolf Hess, the Führer's deputy, had flown the coop. Hess, as I garnered from the newspaper headlines, had flown to England on a self-styled mission to negotiate a peace between Britain and Germany. The official line was, that Hess had gone out of his mind. Hitler accused Hess of suffering from "pacifist delusions."

In September 1941 I was warned by a friend working for the Jewish Administration in Prag that they will come for me to be deported to Theresienstadt. I was supposed to be in a work-group designated "A.K. Einz" These men were to prepare Theresienstadt, a garrison city north of Prague, to become a major concentration-camp, but, I was not yet ready to do this.

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OXEN DRIVER

In Lipa, a village near the city of Brno in Moravia, the SS took possession of a large estate belonging to a Jewish family by the name of Krauss. The main product of this thousand acre farm were potatoes, but it produced also Milk, Eggs, Pork, and more. Horses, Oxen, Cows, Goats, Chickens, rabbits, fowl, deer, were plentiful. This estate supplied the food for the Prague SS. In peace-time 12 farm-workers were employed. The SS, however, "trained" 300 Jews at a time to become farm-workers a "useful" profession. The training was to last three months. What choice did I have? To be picked up after midnight to be deported to Theresienstadt, or worse!? Or, volunteer for Lipa, and face the bleak future after my return. I opted to buy time --- three more months.

I volunteered for Lipa to leave within two days. I packed my rucksack, said goodbye to my room-mates, kissed my parents goodbye and was off to the railroad station. It was the 18th of September 1941. I was never to see my parents again who were to suffer a horrifying death described by Jan Karski, an eye-witness. Let me add here my room-mate Eberhard told me after the war that the Gestapo did come to get me the night after I had left.

After a 4 hour train ride in a passenger car we, twenty Jews sent to learn finally a useful trade, arrived in Lipa, Moravia. Rolling hills, still green, forests and farmland. We were marched to our new quarters, the Krauss estate where we were to remain for 3 months, which became

1 ½ long, very long years! True, the environment was healthy, the work was healthy, but I was to suffer relentless hunger, sometimes of an intensity which made it difficult to fall asleep. But it was not debilitating, rather a hunger exaggerated by young age, fresh air, and hard physical work. What made it worse were two facts. It was permitted to receive packages from home, but I received none, because my parents were deported I believe in March 1942. Furthermore my main staple, the meager bread-ration, was inedible. The local baker produced large beautiful loaves of bread, however when cut open the inside crumbled and tasted horribly sour. The baker received from the SS white flour for 300 men but this Czech bastard replaced half with what may have been sawdust, to sell the other half of white flour on the black market.

Quail, Rabbits, and deer, were harvested during hunts. We, the slaves, acted as beaters, but I could not help but sympathize with the animals. I felt I was in a predicament similar to theirs. These hunts usually yielded hundreds of rabbits, quails etc. I am sure the Prague Gestapo did not go hungry.

The estate had a main building, formerly the Krauss' home, now the home of the two SS-men in charge. Sturmbanführer Lederer, and his side-kick, a real klutz with an IQ of three. I was cleaning the stable when I overheard the following conversation between the two Übermenschen. They looked at two horses which had just arrived. Their names on the wall read "Alpha" and "Beta". Klutz, in heavy Viennese: "What does that mean?" Lederer, in Viennese dialect and matter of fact: Das sind Pferdenamen, "Those are horse names", huah, ha, ha, ha.

In front of the Krauss home, not palatial, but a solid 3 story building, was the courtyard where every morning Lederer and the former Czech

administrator of the estate, still administrator, but now working for the SS, assigned the work to the Jews. Lederer was about 5:5, and in his early 30th. He wore an impeccable gray SS uniform with the gray regulation cap with black visor, skull and bones, black shiny boots, belt and shoulder strap. The Czech administrator had a small mustache, wore riding pants, boots, and had a green Loden cape. and a hat decorated with a "Gamsbrush". The 12 original Czech farm workers were there too. They were very poor, uneducated and of small build, to lead groups of Jews and supervise them.

The problem was to find work for 300 to do the work normally done by only 12. Landarbeiter, country-worker, was the lowest rank, and the only rank open to new-comers, as I was. Some of the work was mind-numbing. For instance, with a partner we carried a wire-basket with two handles, collecting stones in the field. Most of them falling back to the ground through the coarse net. Endlessly we walked the fields. To keep sanity we played various games. There was a couple who actually were able to play chess while walking remembering placement of the figures, and calling out the moves by naming the Chessboard squares. They were even able to continue a game they stopped playing the night before, the next morning. It was incredible to see and hear. We did not work when it rained, not to protect the Jews, but to protect the wet soft fields.

On rainy days we stayed home, sitting in the "Gemeinschaftsraum". In its center was a potbelly stove on which I/we were able to bake slices of raw potatoes, of which we had an unlimited supply. There was of course no fat, butter, nor salt. We stole blue colored animal salt from the cows. It was coarse, but it was salt. There was a dark side to the unlimited potato supply. Potatoes are a diuretic. My record was a night

interrupted 17 times to urinate. The latrine was about a hundred feet from the barracks where we slept. Every time we wanted to use it we had to sign out, and sign back in. One morning I counted 17 interruptions, 34 signatures for one night. On rainy days, or on our days off we had access to some books, and one chess set. I advanced from country-worker to cutting trees. It was much heavier work, but time went by faster. The trees were large, very tall. So tall we had to take into account the direction and speed of the wind 75 feet above the ground. With a partner using a 6 foot saw, curved on one side, with two handles we first cut a nudge, placing it carefully in the direction we wanted the tree to fall. Then we started cutting on the opposite side listening for the brake. Then we stepped back and let gravity do the rest. This work was much harder in winter.

Three months went by and no hint to an end to this boredom. I had advanced to Oxen driver. I did not cut trees, but pulled the cut ones out of the forest with my pair of oxen. As Oxen-driver, a Prestigious job, I was way above the majority, all ordinary "Landarbeiter". I had off every second day sitting in the "gemeinschaftsraum" (public living area) reading old magazines, jumping to attention when Lederer came by to look in. By-the-way, when walking between the courtyard and the barracks one had to freeze into attention when Lederer, der Herr Obersturmbanfuhrer, walked by. He usually responded with a nod.

I was cleaning my Oxen, when I saw Lederer walk in. He walked down the center aisle of the large cow-sty. The cows were facing the walls where the feed boxes were located, their rear-ends lining both sides of the aisle. When suddenly one of the cows let loose a horizontal stream of s---. It went all over the spanking shining, meticulous uniform of the Herr Obersturmbanfuhrer. I laughed, and

Lederer said: "Why are you laughing ? I wiped my smile fast off my face.

Five months passed, and no mail from home. Finally, in March I received a postcard from mother. She and father were in Theresienstadt. Three or four weeks later, I received a heartbreaking message. They were now in Komarov by Lublin in Poland, together with Hanne and her husband. Mother's last words of the postcard were "Mir ist sehr bange". "I am very afraid." I sent them a package with some clothes I seldom wore. A month later it came back to Lipa marked "Addressee moved". I knew this was the confirmation of their end.

In June 1942 we were called up --- all 300 of us. We stood in front of our barracks to be addressed by the Gestapo, two men in civilian cloths standing next to Lederer, our 5 foot "Führer" who, when he addressed us, never succeeded to finishing a single sentence. It was simply above his IQ. The Gestapo-men came from Prague to find out if we could shed some light on the identity of the assassins of Reinhard Heydrich. A rather stupid assumption, since we were so isolated in Lipa and could not possibly know. On May 27, 1942, Czech patriots bombed and shot Heydrich while he was riding in his car on the Prague-Berlin highway. He died June 4 in a Prague hospital. Gestapo officials exacted vengeance for his death by executing hundreds of Czechs and wiping out the entire village of Lidice. Heydrich, nick-named: "Der Henker" died a slow death. The bomb fragments which killed him had penetrated the seats of the car implanting the upholstery -- horse hair - - in his body which poisoned him slowly.

There is another, completely unknown side, to Heydrich, the man in charge of the extermination of the European Jews. he Had Jewish ancestors, and Hitler and Himmler knew it.

Life in Lipa dragged on. Over a year had passed now since I volunteered to learn a “useful” profession, a schooling which was supposed to last three months. My clothes had totally disintegrated. Everything was held up and held together with safety-pins and string. I had no gloves and the winters were severe. To cope in bitter cold and deep snow with the strings and safety-pins to let down my pants with frozen fingers, to empty my bowels was a forbidding task. True, we had no fences in Lipa. Driving a pair of Oxen I was permitted to get out into the country-side, for instance, to pick up a load of Silage, which was kept in the ground about 2 km from the camp. However, to get outside the camp perimeter did not help me, and I had no intention of escaping. Where to? Moreover, I could not expect anybody to risk their lives help a Jew. One day the “Klutz”, Lederer’s side-kick, felt generous. He shot a Crow with his side-gun a Luger. He handed me the dead bird. I cooked it for hours. The broth, if one can call it that, was edible but the rest was not. That’s the first and last time I ate crow – I hope.

* * *

THE “DENTIST”

My bad teeth made trouble. When one tooth split in half it was serious, it had to come out. My fillings were of course not gold inlays but cheap amalgam. When I bit on it the filling did not distribute the pressure evenly as gold inlays do, but it acted like a wedge. My unbalanced diet probably softened my teeth too and they just split. I lost two. They had to be pulled.

We had a “Dentist” in the camp. His office was like every thing else ground-level, and located in a barrack. He had what looked like a primitive dentist’s chair and a drill with a fly-wheel driven by foot. Yes, he also had Novocain. Then came the day for the extraction. He did not know where exactly to inject the Novocain so he gave me about half a dozen little ones. My nose was numb, I had difficulty swallowing, but my tooth was sensitive and alive. Nevertheless he started extracting and the tooth promptly broke off. To get a grip of what was left he removed some of the jaw-bone by drilling it out. He then gripped what he could of the tooth, and it finally came out. During all this time the SS “Klutz” was standing outside in front of the dentist’s window watching, and slapping his thigh, laughing and laughing, Huah, ha, ha, ha!!

After endless 1 ½ years, in March 1943, we were told that we would be moved, and the camp would be closed. I packed my rucksack and the next morning we were loaded on a passenger train via Prague to Theresienstadt.

THERESIENSTADT,

The Encyclopedia Britannica describes it:

Theresienstadt, Czech Terezin, town in northern Bohemia, Czech Republic, founded in 1780 and used from 1941 to 1945 by Nazi Germany as a walled ghetto, or concentration camp, for Jews. Shipment of Jewish captives into Theresienstadt began in November 1941. After the entire non-Jewish population of 3,700 was evacuated in July 1942, thousands of German, Austrian, and Czech Jews began arriving monthly, giving Theresienstadt a peak population of 53,004 in September 1942. Jews from other parts of Europe, notably Denmark and The Netherlands, came thereafter; but the mass influx subsided in late 1943 as the death camps in Poland grew larger. Of the total numbers of inmates from 1941 to 1945 (about 141,000), about 33,500 died in the dense crowding of the ghetto, and 88,000 were shipped on to the extermination camps, especially Auschwitz.

Theresienstadt was surrounded by an earthen wall about 20 feet wide and 25 feet high. When I arrived there on March 8, 1943 Kurt Meier, the pianist nightclub entertainer from Prague, was at the railroad station. I had not seen him for two years but I said 'Hi! Kurt, what's it like?'. "125 die daily of Typhoid". he replied. Not very encouraging! After walking about a mile, we passed the wall into the city.

I will never forget my first encounter with friends who had come to look at the new arrivals. There was Franta who played guitar at the Selig Jazz sessions in Prague, and his girl Gabriella. Both looked well, actually, stunning. To me, an Oxen-driver from Lipa used to seeing mostly the rear-ends of Oxen, endless potato fields, and mountains of manure Gabriella and Franta looked like Hollywood apparitions, just emerged from Rodeo Drive. He wore a brown leather trench-coat, she a

white turtleneck and skirt. Her blue eyes and black hair, naturally streaked with silver-gray were just as I remembered it from Prague: strikingly beautiful. Maybe Theresienstadt is not so bad after all. Let me interject , it was OK for some younger people, but sheer hell for the older. But, young or old, the ubiquitous threat of the dreaded “Transport” remained dominant for everybody. It was again, as in Prague, a dance on a volcano, but more so.

The Jewish administration of Theresienstadt, had to supply the SS, at a moments notice, one-thousand Jews for a “Transport” to be loaded into boxcars for “resettlement”, that is for extermination. Nobody wanted to admit to this horror openly, but subconsciously we knew. The SS, to avoid revolt, gave assurances that we were needed to work for “Victory”, that we were being send to a factory or work-camp in Germany, or whatever other excuse the SS could think of. These transports were of course a part of Hitler’s Final Solution, the extermination of all Jews, or, as Hitler perceived it, finishing the work of the Lord. Let me quote him: “In dem ich mich des Juden erwehre, kämpfe ich fur das Werk des Herrn.” By defending myself against the Jews, I uphold the work of the Lord.

Theresienstadt’s square buildings were two, three, four stories high. They were built of stone and unattractive. Some wood barracks were added later. Originally the city was built to house the military only. Later it became the home for 3,700 Czech civilians, but in late 1941 the civilians were moved out and it became a Jewish concentration camp. The rooms did have large windows, but the only furnishing were sets of three bunks on top of each other, hundreds, and hundreds of them. These bunks then became the “home” of the deported Jews arriving from all over Europe.

The population of Theresienstadt peaked in 1942 with over 50,000 or to almost twenty times its prewar level. Crowding, lack of food resulted in disease, and high mortality. I was assigned my “apartment”, a bunk in a room filled with about 100 fellow Jews. I dumped my rucksack on the bunk, and stepped out on the street to search for friends. In 1941, 300 young Czech Jews converted Theresien into a concentration camp. Czechs were the first to arrive and became the old-timers, consequently, they held the best jobs. Two factors made a job the “best”. If it offered Protection from being sent off in a transport, and additional food. Obviously, to be a cook or a baker was desirable, but so was to work in the Jewish administration, which could give protection from being deported again. As a late-comer I had no illusions of becoming a cook or administrator, but Lene Bellak a friend told me that by joining the so called “Ghettowache”, the internal Jewish police, I would be protected. The head of this police-force was Loewenstein, a Jew and former German U-boat Commander. It was not easy to get into this select group, and, as I found out later, it was even harder to get out. I returned to my bunk contemplating my next moves for survival. My first night was a bad one. A middle-aged man on the adjacent bunk was sick. His wife, who lived in another building, took care of him. She told me he had a strep-throat. In the middle of the night I woke up. The sick man next to me was sitting up trying to catch his breath, when suddenly he fell back, dead, just like that! I got dressed to tell his wife, but could not find her. I went back to bed, however, when the dead man’s left arm fell and came to rest next to his body and I accidentally touched his cold hand, I got up again and asked a fellow room-mate to help me carry the dead body into the cellar where there was a room for corpses,

a "Leichenkammer". There was nobody to tell, or notify of the death of this man. He had died and now there was one Jew less.

My duties in the Ghattowache (Ghetto-police) were to stand guard at one of the few gates built into the wall surrounding the city, usually at 3 in the morning. I did this for about a month, but I do not recall anybody wanting to leave or enter at that hour. The food was poor. There was a watery soup which was really not edible, followed by the "entrée" which I had to eat to stay alive. Nevertheless under-nourished dreadful looking, mostly German Jews, stood at the food-line begging: "Nimmt der Herr die Suppe?" Sir, are you going to eat your soup?, hoping to get my portion.

I discovered that almost all important jobs were held by Czech Jews, usually friends or acquaintances. Willy, Franta, Tommy, were cooks. I also got the sad news that Gretl my dancing-school sweetheart from Vienna had recently died of typhoid. Brothers Honsa and Wolf Selig had left earlier in a transport to the east --- Auschwitz. This is what had transpired. Honsa Selig's girl, Senta, remained in Prague because her mother was German. But, she traveled to Theresienstadt where she secretly met Honsa on, or near the wall passing him a suitcase with food. This was, of course, terribly dangerous. I believe it was at the fourth secret meeting when they were caught. Nothing happened to Senta but, Honsa was locked up to be dispatched in the next transport as punishment, (strafweise). This was equal to a death-sentence because Jews sent "strafweise" were put in the last boxcar of a transport. Anybody in the last car was gassed on arrival in Auschwitz, whereas the victims in other cars had a chance on arrival, of being selected for slave labor by Infamous doctor Mengele waiting on the RR ramp.

Mrs. Selig, much younger than her husband, was a beautiful woman. She had an affair with a high-ranking SS officer. It seems this man broke his promise to save her family. This may have been the reason why all of the Seligs perished in spite of their money, which could have bought freedom – perhaps?

I remained in touch with Senta to the day she died in Sidney, Australia in 1997. She never came to terms with the role she played in the death of her big love, Honsa. In 1943 she volunteered to be deported(!) to Theresienstadt hoping to pick up the trail of Honsa. Unsuccessful in Theresienstadt, she then tried to get into a transport to Auschwitz, yes, to Auschwitz, still hoping to find her Love. I witnessed her attempt on the railroad ramp in Therezin where a transport was being assembled. She tried to convince Marmelstein, a fat rabbi, in charge of Therezin at the time, to let her go. She actually bit him in the ear. Evidently her fixation on Honsa, had made her irrational. She died in Sidney in at age 70 of Lymphoma.

I found relatives in Therezin. A brother of my father, Oskar, and his two sons. I never really knew them, and I saw them only twice in Therezin. Also the parents of my brother-in-law. I visited them in their building. The old man always smiled, but, one day he had disappeared. His wife had cut a corn on his foot resulting in an infection. He was operated and a huge bandage was covering the surgery. Within a few days Lice infected his bandage and he was immediately transferred to “Entlausung” (de-lousing) This was a room where Lice infected prisoners were collected. Many just died there. I found the “Old man” and my police attire giving me some authority, I had him transferred back to his old room and the Lice infected bandage exchanged. This saved his life, if only for a while.

A “HOSPITAL”

A short time after I had arrived from Lipa in 1943, I woke up one morning and knew something was wrong. I went to the doctor and he diagnosed me with an infectious encephalitis. All my lymph-nodes were swollen. I dragged myself to the “hospital”, a hall with about a hundred beds filled with sick women and men. They gave me the “Romberg test” but, I do not recall any therapy. Maybe there was none? I just lay there running a high temperature. I vaguely remember a macabre scene. Two beds down the aisle a patient had died. There was some commotion, but like through a haze I saw this patient’s belongings disappear one by one. His slippers, his soap, his robe, his wristwatch, and he wasn’t even cold yet.

Two weeks after I had arrived in the “hospital” I ran a very high temperature. The next morning I woke up drenched, but again I knew I was over the hump, starting to recuperate. Uncle Oskar and his sons, as well as the parents of my brother-in-law came to visit. They were not permitted inside, but I spoke with them from my 2nd floor window. After nearly four weeks in bed I was released, but I could hardly walk.

Using a cane I dragged myself back to my “coal cellar”. Shortly before I got sick I had found this space in the basement of one of the houses. I had cleared out the coal. All it needed now was a bed, and a stove mostly to take out the dampness. It was not very inviting, but it was my space, better than the rooms with 600 room-mates. These spaces carved out in cellars and attics were called “Kumbals”.

I found a new job no more “police work”, I was to work as a technical draftsman-designer for the “Produktion”, I designed peasant furniture. Chairs, tables, and beds. I made the proto-types on a few machine-

tools available to me in the so called Reitschule. It was professional stuff. My peasant chair was successful. Hundreds of them were made. Ing. Freiburger, the boss, was happy with my work and had me listed as a "baker". For 3 weeks I had to help bake bread in the bakery, originally built to supply bread for 2,000 soldiers. As a baker I was then entitled to one loaf per day. It was excellent bread, not contaminated as in Lipa. I returned to the production, but I continued drawing my daily loaf. Bread was gold --- "suddenly I was rich" --- like my old man.

The Germans now started preparations to transform Therezin into a model city demonstrating to the world how well the Germans treated the Jews. But they had a problem. Over a 100 people died daily because of the raging Typhoid epidemic in spite of great efforts by the Jewish administration to reduce the spreading of the disease.

In the past corpses were collected in the morning, and were thrown on a wagon and carted off. That would convey the wrong impression. I was assigned to design a respectable funeral carriage, able to dispatch not just one, but a dozen corpses at a time to a cemetery. When I got this assignment I thought they were kidding. They weren't. I used the under-carriage of an old Austrian-Hungarian hearse, many of which were still standing in a courtyard. I added a contraption sitting on top of the carriage able to hold 12 caskets at a time. This kept me busy for a while, but, as I expected it was never used.

In June 1943 George Tessar arrived from Prague. I had met him at the Selig's jazz sessions where he played the trombone. As a former goalie for the Czech all-star junior team, they had played against Hungary and Austria, George was of course well-known and a VIP. We hooked up to share the coal-cellar. His contribution was substantial in converting this space into an attractive little apartment. And attractive it

was. A corner couch covered with linen with a Scottish pattern, a wash basin with an electric water-heater, a stove, and more.

In the summer of 43 The "Kistenproduktion" (wood-box production) started. The sub-zero temperatures of the Russian winters made it difficult to start airplane engines. We made ordinary wooden boxes, which were fitted over the airplane's engines. I never understood how these wood-boxes could possibly help starting the engines. This job, however, provided some protection against the dreaded transports All I had to do was watch 25 women nailing the boxes together. My boss, Ing. Levit was pleased with the work we, I, did.

What follows is one of the closest calls I had in my 3 ½ years of incarceration. In the fall of 1943 a transport of 5,000 Jews were to leave for the East, Auschwitz. The SS had dissolved the Ghetto police after killing Loewenstein, the former German U-boat captain and head of the Ghettowache. As punishment, I never discovered for what, all members and former members of the Ghettowache were to be included in this upcoming transport. Now the Ghettowache, which was supposed to be my salvation, almost became my misfortune. I was put in this transport and appointed in charge of boxcar No: 33. I just shrugged my shoulders, packed my bag and went to say goodbye to friends. But, on saying goodbye to my boss Ing. Levit, he was surprised, "I had you removed, I need you". I rushed to the Administration building to check on my status. They looked through the lists and found that I should have been excluded. Casually I was told: "No, you are not in the transport."

Of the 5,000 of this transport no one survived. After five months in Auschwitz they all were gassed. Ing. Levit had saved my life. I looked for him after the war to thank him, but could not find him anywhere.

HITLER DONATES A TOWN TO THE JEWS

Die Stadtverschönerung, the beautification of Theresienstadt, was a hoax next to which Potemkin's villages looked amateurish. To pass off Therezin as an example of how well the Jews were treated by Hitler, the SS first reduced the over-crowding by sending half of the population including children into the gas, to Auschwitz. Then the house-fronts were painted, the streets scrubbed, Curtains appeared in windows, and the third, the top bunks, were removed. . On the square in the center of town around the music pavilion tulips and roses were planted. The "Hospital", the hall in which I languished, was converted into a cafe. Our Jazz orchestra the "Ghetto-Swingers" performed.

This charade culminated with the visit of the Swedish Red Cross. They arrived in June 1944 to participate, yes, participate in the charade by dutifully "inspecting" Therezin. The joke circulating at the time was the answer of an inmate to the question by the head of the Swedish Red Cross, "How do you like it here"? "I must say", he answered, "it's a lovely place." ! After the Red Cross clowns left the SS produced fast a movie with the delusive title: "The Führer donates a town to the Jews" It showed happy Jews frolicking through the countryside while the German soldiers laid down their lives for the fatherland. It was even worse than an old communist propaganda film. When all was over 18,500 Therezin Jews were sent to Auschwitz, and I was one of them.

* * *

PART TWO

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ARRIVAL IN AUSCHWITZ

In the fall of 1944 the frequency of the Teresienstadt “transports” rose to a crescendo. I felt my time had come. My VIP room-mate Jirka had left three days earlier on September 28. The SS took great pains to cover up the smell of death clinging to transports, to avoid a revolt. They did so in particular with our transport because there were no old, no sick, nor children left, and we were all young and in good physical shape. The SS “spin” Goebbels’ catch phrase “Total Mobilization” was the Key-word. , Goebbels explained, Germany summoned all its forces, even the Jews, to work for victory”. This was given as the reason for our transport, to leave for a German armament factory. No more box-cars, only regular passenger cars, 2nd, and 3rd, class were used. Each transportee received a loaf of bread, margarine and salami, and no more than 50 men and women were loaded into one car. Our transport consisted of 1,000 men and women.

Auschwitz is not ,as commonly assumed, in the far eastern regions of Europe, but exactly in its geographic center less than 300 miles from Vienna, Budapest, Prague and Berlin. Auschwitz was 200 miles south-east of Therezin, but these transports all left in the opposite direction, to the north, towards Germany. They could not go to Auschwitz, could they? The emerging psychology reinforced by the unacceptable concept of extermination fooled us into believing, what we really wanted to believe, that we were about to be transported to Germany.

Alone, now in my “Coal-cellar” packing my rucksack, I got word to bring along my room-mate’s, Jirka’s Trombone he had left behind. I did

not give it another thought and placed the instrument next to the door, so I would not forget it on leaving.

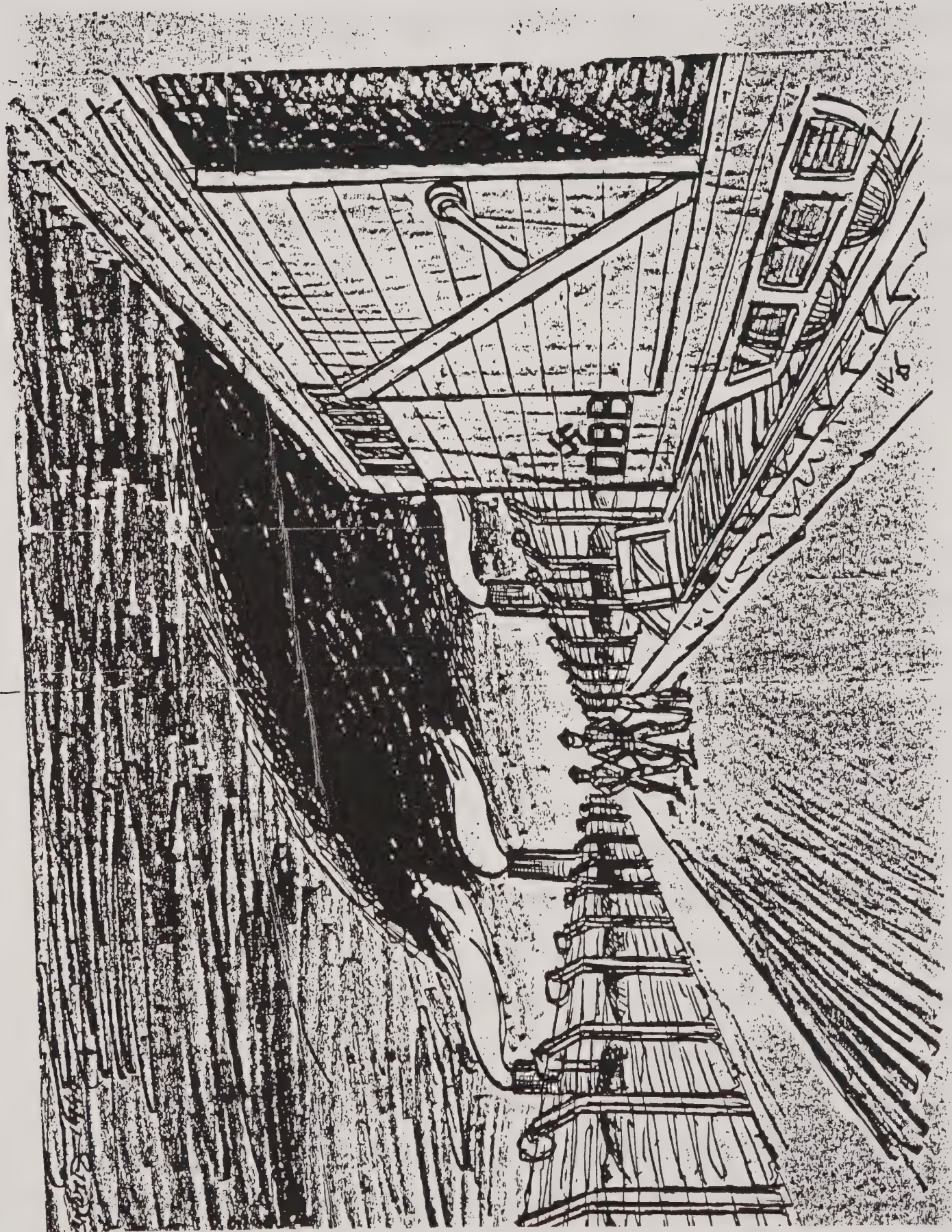
This time I did not bid friends goodbye because most of them had to leave too. I left October 3rd 1944 in the morning. We traveled in a northerly direction in passenger cars with some of the windows open. After a few hours, however, our train started to turn east, and turn, and turn. The SS had ordered the transports to travel first north to mislead the Terezin prisoners left behind. I do not recall my thoughts. I was tired, I guess I just gave up. It was typical October weather, gray cold, drizzle and some fog when we passed early afternoon a railroad station marked "Blechhammer", German Gothic letters black on white. All the name, vaguely familiar to me, indicated that it had something to do with heavy industry. I saw little men busy working all wearing blue and white vertically striped uniforms looking like pajamas. It was very quiet now in our car.

Another hour and we had arrived. The sign on the railroad station, Gothic letters black on white said "Auschwitz". I remember one lone voice in our car: "don't loose your nerve". We stood for a while and then our transport consisting of 20 cars was backed up. Standing at the open window sticking my head out a bit I saw, straight ahead, at the end of the track two smoke-stacks about 40 feet high. From their tops emanating a large 20 feet long red flame changing into heavy black smoke. It still drizzled, and the smoke did not rise but drifted low over the camp. At a distance of 25 feet a Waffen SS soldier with his automatic weapon at the ready stood guard. Looking at me he said: "Da bleibt ihr schon". That's where you'll stay for good. The RR ramp was elevated and we could see many barracks surrounded by a forbidding electric barbed wire fence. Concrete pillars with white

porcelain insulators, each topped with an electric reflector-light pointing inside. The lamps were lit. It was still raining and getting dark. We had stopped, the doors opened and in rushed well fed, strong looking inmates dressed in blue striped pajamas.

They belonged to a special privileged group called Canada. Outside the SS shouting "Rauss, Rauss, get out, out. Leave everything in the car, rauss, rauss. I said to one of the well fed blue striped: "What are the chances" Without saying a word he gestured, with his head only, towards the flaming chimneys. I did not understand. Jumping out I found myself in the midst of the surrealist setting of Hitler's industrialized extermination machinery (see my sketch)

Dominating the scene were the flaming chimneys in the background. Their flames gave everything a reddish cast. A sweetish stench hang in the air filling my nostrils. Of course I did not know It was the stench of burning human flesh. Because of the humidity the electric fences, crackled. I stood waiting in a line to face an SS officer (Doctor Mengele). We were to announce to him our state of health, age, and profession, when I suddenly heard my name called out. Yes, there it was again: **Loebel, Loebel.** Who could possibly know me by name in this crazed place, the last place on earth I wanted to be known!! But, I answered "Here!". An SS man approached: "Hast du die Posaune gebracht?" Did you bring the trombone? "Jawohl" "Give it to me", he said. We went back into the car. The scene was bedlam. The blue striped well-fed commando had cut open all luggage to grab what seemed worthwhile grabbing. There, on the luggage rack, where I left it, was the trombone case. I handed it over, left the car and stepped back in line to face Mengele.



WHAT I SAW ON ARRIVAL IN AUSCHWITZ 1944

In front of me was Fritzek Weiss our clarinet virtuoso. Fritzek stepped forward and announced to Mengele: "Ich habe einen Hertzfehler". I have a heart defect. I instinctively knew Fritzek had just pronounced his death sentence. Now it was my turn. At a distance of 15 feet I stood in attention in front of "The Angle of Death" Mengele. To his left his SS side-kick (adjutant). Mengele sat on a box, his left foot on the ground the other dangling. His right elbow on his right thigh and in spite of the rain and mud, his boots shiny. In his right hand he held a pair of gloves. Good looking, in a gray SS uniform he listened, while I, with raised voice,

announced:

HEALTHY,
TWENTY-SEVEN,
ELECTRICIAN"

Casually, Mengele pointed to his left and I joined a waiting group. Observing now from a distance Mengele sending the newly arrived to the left and right, to live, or die. I saw many familiar faces sent to the right to disappear for ever. An SS-man now ordered us into rows of five and marched us off. The barbed wire electric fences were everywhere, not only around the camp, but inside dividing it into sections. Behind the crackling fences pitiful creatures begging for food. Our pockets filled with food we threw some over the fence when a shot rang out. The SS-man a few feet behind me walking on the left outside of our formation had fired a shot whizzing low over our heads hitting a girl who had come near the fence hoping to catch some of the food. There she lay now on her back near the fence in the mud, clutching her throat, knees pulled up and spread. There she lay this dying child, once the object of love and affection by parents who now surely had perished

too. Staring straight ahead we marched by the young victim behind the fence. It had taken some time, about 3 hours, but this killing drove home reality immediately and relentlessly. The reality of what I called the “anus of the world”: Auschwitz.

We entered a barrack. It was a barn with a high ceiling held up by beams. Two bare bulbs dangling from the ceiling providing dim illumination. Hundreds of us stood tightly packed next to each other, were listening to the welcome speech. An SS-man addressed us from a platform.

Hand over your watches, Jewelry, Gold, Silver, and boots. Should I find boots or anything of value on any of you I will personally hang him from this beam, pointing at one of the many. We knew he meant it. Next to me stood Tommy. He was much younger, I knew him from the Selig's jazz sessions. When the “nice” SS-man mentioned boots, I observed Tommy slowly pulling his pants out of his boots and dropping them back to hide them. I did not believe my eyes. Why would he want to risk his life for a pair of boots?? He became my best friend and lives now in Caracas. I never ask him why he did it. Next we were marched to another place for body inspection.

“Take off your clothes and dump them on the ground”. We now stood naked. Next, our hair was cut, all hair. We were soaked with a disinfectant, It burned. We found out that five hundred, or 50 percent of our transport, had been sent into the gas. On the average 80 percent of all Jewish transports were killed on arrival. That half of us survived was above average. This was corroborated by a remark I overheard between the SS-men inspecting our bodies.

“Das ist ja das beste Material das ich hier je gesehen habe”. (That's the best material I've ever seen here).

We were issued “new” clothes. A blue striped pajama, a cap and shoes. They were both left ones. It must have been past midnight, I was terribly, terribly tired. The tension, the continuous pumping of Adrenaline, the unacceptable reality was devastating. Please, please, could we just lie down and sleep. We were led into one of the hundreds of barracks we had seen from the RR-car. It was filled with the newly arrived, a space about 100 feet long, 25 feet wide and 10 feet high. It was divided in the center by a 2 foot brick wall. The floor was concrete, originally built to accommodate horses it was now supposed to accommodate one thousand of us. We had to stand tightly next to each other. Then, because of German ingenuity and “compassion” prisoners from the other half were forced into the half were I stood. This made it possible for the remaining men to lie down. In a few hours we were again shifted to enable the other half to lie down. I learned to appreciate the difference between sleeping on concrete, or sleeping in “luxury”, that is, on wood. The next morning, on waking up, we thought we were having a nightmare. To our sorrow we discovered, it was not a bad dream. It was reality! We were redistributed into the barracks. They were identical and placed along the “Lagerstrasse”, the center drag. One of the barracks was the latrine. It could handle about 50, maybe a hundred inmates at a time. two long boards, one on each side with dozens of holes to sit on. It was a ghastly experience. In the many books I read on Auschwitz one author used the expression “Excremental Assault”. It was fitting. As I had to learn, back when I was an Oxen driver, to blow my nose without a handkerchief, I had to learn now to defecate without toilet paper. On the way back to my barrack I finally took off my “left” shoes, they hurt like hell, off and throwing them away. a Kapo saw me, didn’t like what I was doing and hit me with his

cupped hand on my ear. It was a vicious blow. I lost my hearing on one ear, and was lucky. The broken eardrum healed without infection.

“Kapos” were in charge inside the camp. They were German criminals whose sentence, often a death-sentence, had been commuted to serving in Auschwitz. Compared to the rest, the Kapos lived like kings. They had rooms of their own. They ate special food, and had access to “Goodies” which “Canada” had collected from newly arrived Jewish transports. Jewelry and money (gold) was reserved for the SS, but, gourmet food, Cigars, Perfume, Alcohol, textiles, and more was made accessible to Kapos.

In charge of each barrack was a German criminal. Our Kapo was Kaspar Dietz from Schweinfurt. He had killed boys and his death-sentence had been commuted to serving in Auschwitz. German criminals were in charge of all barracks. Our Kapo had boys living with him. Jewish boys and girls were usually gassed on arrival. However, some of them “slipped” through. By permitting them into his room and bed, our Kapo had saved their lives.

We were lined up to get our tattoo number. Tommy and I stood in line.

At the head of the line, on a low stool, sat a prisoner who tattooed numbers into lower left arms, using a wooden pin which he dipped into ink.

Back in the barrack the order “Achtung” (Attention) was sounded.

We jumped to attention. An SS-man entered and shouted:

“Erfider hervor”. Inventors step forward. Inventors in this turmoil ! I could have easily pretended to be an inventor, but I did not raise my hand, but never volunteer, it can be very bad for your health. I don't know what happened to three inventors who stepped forward, but I never saw them again. I remember another strange spectacle. I

estimate that about 10 to 15 percent of all inmates in Auschwitz were non-Jews, mostly Christian Poles, Gypsies, some Jehovah Witnesses, German homosexuals, and others. Jews were kept separated, but it was not strictly enforced. It did not need to be, because only Jews were gassed, only Jews suffered "Selektion". Non-Jews felt relatively safe. The marking, the color of the triangle preceding their number, identified prisoners as non-Jews.

Under Goebbels' "Totaleinsatz", total mobilization, prisoner transports were assembled to leave Auschwitz for Buchenwald. I saw a group of about 300 Poles strenuously protesting to be sent to Buchenwald. They wanted to stay in this hell for Jews, in Auschwitz, because it was nearer their home-towns. They did not want to go to Germany. Poles preferred Auschwitz in Poland to Buchenwald in Germany. Auschwitz was an extermination camp for Jews, not Poles. Only 100,000 Poles, died in Auschwitz, only 21,000 Gypsies, and only 15,000 Soviets, but over a million Jews.

Prisoners arriving in Auschwitz fell into two categories: Jews and non-Jews. Only Jews, let me repeat, only Jews received "Sonderbehandlung", special treatment, the SS' euphemism for gassing. Non-Jews, as a rule, were not gassed. They were never gassed on arrival, but entered the camp and received a number which was tattooed on their left lower arm. In contrast 80 percent of the Jews were gassed on arrival, the rest entered the camp and were tattooed. When we got out of the railroad car and faced Mengele we experienced our first so called "Selektion". The idea was to weed out the weak. Randomly, Mengele carried out additional selections inside the Jewish enclosures. There were, as a rule, no selections in non-Jewish enclosures. This was the procedure for a "Selektion": We

stood in two rows in front of our barrack in attention. At a distance of 20 feet, quite a distance to decide whether a man is fit for work or should be killed, Mengele and his adjutant walked by at a good pace, never stopping, but pointing at certain prisoners. The selected had to step forward. After Mengele's departure they were driven into a special barrack and from there to the gas chambers. I could expand on this horror by elaborating what transpired in the children's barrack. It is really impossible for me to contemplate, even 50 years later.

Damocles' sword had changed now from the dreaded "Transport" to the deadlier "Selektion". To look young, healthy, strong, had become an imperative, a matter of life and death. I badly needed a shave. One of the inmates peddled his razor for bread. I certainly had lost my appetite and gave him my bread and he gave me a shave I never forgot. I was leaning with my head and back against the barrack wall while he scraped, and scraped. No soap, no water. It was painful, and I developed a terrible rash. Luckily it broke out a few days later, after I had put distance between the Chimneys and myself.

* * *

“JOB INTERVIEW”

SS Oberscharführer Otto Moll, a sadist, and mass murderer, hollered: “Welders, step forward”. We had been herded into an open field. Still drizzling the wet ground reflected the Chimney’s red flames. Moll, formerly in charge of the Auschwitz Crematoria where he personally dropped the cyanide pellets into the underground gas chambers, had been kicked upstairs and made commander of Gleiwitz-Einz. It was a slave labor camp 60 km north-west of Auschwitz and supplied labor for an adjacent heavy industry plant. Moll had come to Auschwitz looking for welders, metal-lathe workers, technicians, etc. We, hundreds of prisoners, huddled in our pajamas in the mud, foremost on our minds to put distance between us and the flaming chimneys. We were hoping to answer Moll’s questions correctly to qualify for a transfer to his camp. As an engineer I had no problems, but my friend Tommy and the others had. They begged: “Please, Herb, quick, tell me what to say”. I did my best to tell them in a few minutes what took me years to learn.

After a while I stepped forward. I forgot his questions, but Moll must have been satisfied with my answers. He wetted a stamp he held in his right hand on an ink-pad in his left and stamped me in the middle of my forehead. This then was my passport to Gleiwitz-Eins.

I returned to my barrack. There, Peter, 14 years old, smelling of Channel Number 5, the brother of a girl I knew in Prague stepped up to me, and pointing at my stamped forehead warned: “I see Moll selected you. Do not go, he is a monster, he just wants to build himself an extermination facility in Gleiwitz”. Peter repeated: Do not go! I took him very seriously because he had been in Auschwitz for some time. I now had to make a very difficult decision. Wiping the stamp off my

forehead meant to remain close to the chimneys and probably face another “Selektion” -- to live or die. Or should I leave the stamp and go to Moll’s camp Gleiwitz-Einz. I wiped it off, and it probably saved my life, that is, little Peter saved my life. Moll’s Gleiwitz –Einz sub-camp was a frightful place. Tommy, luckily, had not passed Moll’s examination, was never stamped and remained, as did I, in Auschwitz until the the next day when SS Obersturmbanführer Spieker came from his camp, Gleiwitz-Drei, to select new slaves. Again we stood huddled together, but this time we all passed and left together the next morning by truck for Gleiwitz-Drei. I suffered from diarrhea and almost missed the truck to take me to Spieker’s camp. I was the last to climb on it, standing at the tail gate, next to a “Waffen SS” soldier with his gun at the ready. Looking back I saw the flaming chimneys, symbols of shame of a “civilized” nation, and, for that matter, of Humanity, disappearing on the horizon .

We got to the outskirts of Gleiwitz, a city of 300,000. In a few minutes we arrived in “Gleiwitz Drei” our new “home”. At this point we did not have food or sleep for days, and I had come physically and emotionally to the lowest point of my 3 1/2 years imprisonment. In addition I had a foul rash in the face, aftermath of my “shave.”

* * *

A GOOD CONCENTRATION CAMP

Gleiwitz -III, a sub-camp of Auschwitz turned out to be a good camp! Commandant, SS Obersturmbanführer Spiecker, was not a sadist, nor a monster like his neighbor Moll in Gleiwitz Einz. As a matter of fact in the three months of my imprisonment in Gleiwitz-Drei only three inmates died. But, they died after drinking de-naturalized alcohol. Spieker's adjutant was bad as Moll. One could tell from his face, his body-language, his utterances. Given the opportunity, he would have been an SS-brute.

Spieker's first order was to give us some soup. It was watery, but edible. Then we were led to the bath-house for a badly needed shower. Our quarters were clean, located in an industrial barrack formerly used by the German air-force. These quarters were adjacent to a heavy industry plant, the Polish Company Zeleniewsky Comp.. known for the manufacture of rail-road cars. The daily routine was characteristic for a labor camp. Specialists, the few who could weld and do lathe work went to their work stations in the factory, the rest did random work, mostly digging the ground.

After doing this work for about a week I was called by Spieker, the Camp Commander: "Du bist ein technischer Zeichner ?" That's when I remembered that on arrival I filled out in a register as profession "Technischer Zeichner" (technical draftsman). Standing in attention I said: "Jawohl". Do you know what will happen to you if you lie?", I could well imagine being returned to Auschwitz. I replied: "Jawohl". Pointing at my pajama he said: "Get a new uniform, and get a shave every day". The next morning shaven and all dressed up I went, instead of digging the ground, to the office. A low centrally heated building

adjacent to a factory hall. There I worked, again standing at a large drafting-table as I did at Bata in Zlin. My colleagues in the office were a middle-aged Polish Jewish engineer and a young Polish non-Jewish civilian woman. Now, my life at Gleiwitz-Drei changed drastically for the better. To keep the Kapo in charge off my neck I brought him every evening "Das Reich" the official German news paper. The young Polish women gave me some of the food she brought to work. The work was strange, unreal, under the circumstances. Dressed in prison-garb, head shaven, tattooed, in a civil environment with access to a regular toilette, I was working on two projects. One with the cover-name "EMC GEFASSE", the other named "GERÄT OSTKREUZ". The first was an electric sea-mine and Gerat Ostkreuz was a light field cannon. From the parts list on the blue-prints I could easily see that most of the parts were not available because the supplying factories, most of them in the Rhineland, had been bombed out. I knew my sea-mine, and my cannon would never be used, because they would never be finished. Moreover, every work-drawing warned in big print: "top secret, do not talk to anybody, the enemy is listening!!" A few days after I had started my new job the Camp Commander looked in. He stood behind me and I knew he looked over my shoulder. I had the feeling he was self-satisfied for having discovered me, to help Greater Germany win the war. I knew my efforts were a waste, but our camp commander had to be of a different opinion. So important was my contribution, that evenings, after "dinner", an SS-man came to pick me up and walk me to my office to put in another two hours. He walked behind me with his gun at the ready. In the office he pulled up a chair to sit next to my drafting board, and usually he poured out his problems: "I did not want to join the WAFFEN-SS, but I was drafted". The WAFFEN-SS was the

military branch of the SS. If I had refused, he said, they would have shot me.

In the camp, away from the office, I had been elevated to a higher position. The SS commander had brilliantly concluded that if I was a technical draftsman I probably knew how to read and write. I was made a "Schreiber" a "writer" I kept lists of inmates' numbers. Where they worked and what they did. My immediate boss was the Ober-Kapo. His name was Rudi, barrel-chested 6 foot 6, a giant, strong as an ox. He had been recently transferred to Gleiwitz-Drei . Rumors had spread that under commander Spicker the camp was becoming a "hotel". Rudi was supposed to "liven" things up. He didn't. If he ever was a brute, he now was a pussy-cat. I had to listen to his horror stories of "old" times. He was one of the original so called "Moor-Soldaten". He told me a story about Moll, the next-door SS commander of Gleiwitz-Einz. Moll once complained to him that he never got a medal from Hitler in spite of the fact that he personally had killed a million Jews. Moll was the one who dropped the Cyanide pellets into the underground gas chambers at Auschwitz.

On Sundays we did not work. I was standing at a fenced window on the third floor of our industrial building peeking out into a nearby park where people walked. Parents with their children, mothers pushing carriages, children playing, and --- I cried. This was the first time in 3 ½ years of incarceration that I felt sorry for myself.

One Sunday we were called to assemble. The Commander will introduce you to the new latrine. We went to the basement and there in a row, like soldiers, stood fifteen shiny white new toilet-bowls without seats and covers. The commander's side-kick proceeded to show us how to use them and how to flush them --- no kidding. It was comical. I

just wonder how they got hold of fifteen new toilet-bowls in December 1944.

In Gleiwitz-Drei we bonded, Tommy and I. We shared the soap. A very small piece of soap. We shared the towel. A very small towel. We shared the bread ration. A very small ration. But, with the food I brought home from the office there was almost enough. Christmas approached. I was asked by the head-capo, and by fellow inmates to draw Christmas cards in return for bread. "Geräht Ost-Kreuz" had to wait. I drew winter landscapes. Little mountain villages. They sold like hot-cakes. That my fellow-inmates were willing to pay with bread for a Christmas card in itself was proof that we were relatively well off in Spieker's camp.

We had a theater. Moll, the mass-killer, and two of his henchmen had come over to watch the performance. They were sitting in the first row. I sat only two rows behind them, but could see and feel the brutality exuding from them.

One evening walking alone, on my way from the office to the camp a locomotive was being backed up into the factory area. I heard the locomotive driver sing:

"im Jänner ist alles vorbei mit dem Hitler und seiner Partei"

(In January all will be over with Hitler and his party). It was music to my ears. I felt that finally, what we have been waiting for over three long, years. 1,275 days, The end, was approaching but, It was not here yet, but we had no doubt it was not far off, particularly after I brought back to the camp the local Gleiwitz newspaper of the day, January 9, 1945. The headline read: "Riots at the Gleiwitz Railroad Station". "Gleiwitz population trying to flee west."

THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING

The SS was fidgety. The Russians would kill them. They were, of course, anxious to keep as much distance as possible between themselves and the Red Army. But, they could not just run, because where ever they were behind the front line, they would have had to justify why they were not on the front fighting the enemy. However, herding Jewish prisoners west, made them legal.

In early January 1944 The SS emptied dozens of Slave-labor camps all located in eastern Poland and marched the prisoners west until they reached another now empty camp to spend the night. It was bitter cold and deep snow. These prisoner columns looked pitiful, heartbreaking. Many too weak to walk, all dressed in prison garb, vertically striped thin pajamas. At the head of these columns walked the SS camp commander with a gunner and a machine-gun. Then came the Slaves in disorderly rows of five. Some were pulling wagons loaded with SS-loot. On each side of the column, about 20 feet apart, walked SS with their automatic weapons at the ready, and at the end again a machine-gun. These marches deteriorated into the notorious death-marches where the slow were killed, their corpses lining the roads. It was in one of those formation, I was to find myself walking west towards the city of Cosel, on the Oder river.

Early morning line-up,. We stood outdoors in the bitter cold awaiting the camp commander. The word had spread, we are quitting. Then the shout "Achtung!!", announcing the commander. He came and announced that we are leaving. I had no belongings, nothing to pack, nothing to carry, except the camp-commander's adjutant gave me a box to carry. It's for the Commandant, he said. It was very light.

I did not even have a coat. Since I worked in an office I had never been given one. The others, most working outdoors, had coats. I found a blanket. It was thin but better than nothing, and my shoes made of fabric with wooden soles provided pretty good insulation against the snow. It was so cold that the snow made a high pitched noise when stepped on. It must have been ten (centigrade) below. Our column traversed the outskirts of Gleiwitz. The Germans came out of their houses to look at the spectacle. To my surprise I saw women turning away, crying. We must have looked worse than I thought we did. I felt OK, I had completely recovered from my low point of some time ago.

We walked west, on the surfaced highway, left and right, deep forests part of the endless Silesian forests. The benevolence of commandant Spicker is corroborated by the following. While inmates of the "Death - marches" were shot if they fell back nobody was shot in our column. He even permitted my colleague from the office, the middle-aged Polish Jewish engineer who had problems walking, to ride sitting on the "Loot-Wagon" pulled by inmates.

Tommy and I discussed escaping into the forests. Even if successful, what then?? The vast Silesian forests, deep snow, and bitter cold did not look inviting, moreover, we had no food. It was mid afternoon, when we crossed the river Oder near the city of Cosel. A motor-cycle messenger overtook us. He stopped at the head of the column and talked to the SS Camp-Commander. We had stopped. Down came the word: we have to turn around to spend the night in Gross-Rosen concentration camp, about 17 km back. Now we were walking east, towards the front. Coming against us, on the left, long disorderly columns of the retreating German Wehrmacht. Dressed in bedraggled uniforms they were a picture of a beaten army. No tanks, mostly artillery

and infantry. They had come to a stop. A German soldier huddled in his ragged gray coat sitting on top of a large artillery piece looked down at me. We were passing in the opposite direction when he ask me: "Ja wo gehts'dn ihr hin" ?? Where the heck are you all going?? We looked worse than they did, and walking in deep winter in striped pajamas towards the enemy piqued his curiosity. I answered, speaking his dialect: "Mir wern' die Roten aufhalten". We are going to stop the Reds. It left him speechless, I will never forget his expression. It was an eerie encounter. We kept walking east. There was a strange silence, no sign of the Red Army, but one sensed their proximity. It was dark when we entered the now empty camp of Gross-Rosen. Instead of an electric fence this camp was surrounded by a 20(!) foot wall with a triple barbed wire fence along the top. We, and the SS, were dead tired. I slept in a barrack on a straw mattress. The next morning we found some food in a storage room next to the kitchen. SS strategy now changed. Out-running the Russians was more important than being legitimate by herding Jews. Commander Spiecker selected 12 prisoners in good shape, to continue with him, and he abandoned the rest. They stayed in Gross-Rosen. Spiecker had selected me, however, I felt that this was my first "unguarded" moment in 3½ years and I had to take advantage, so I just disappeared into the forest. This was more an emotional than a reasoned step. But. there were other considerations. The SS was known to send death-squads into the abandoned camps to kill surviving prisoners. I did not want to be one of them. Tommy, however, stayed in Gross-Rosen. When I met him a week later in Gleiwitz he told me in his typically optimistic fashion: "Oh, it was OK, after you left. There was some shooting, but I was not hurt,

Egon, lost the tip of a finger, otherwise no problems. It was cryptic and I never got the details.

Now I started to walk east. Nothing but snow, cold, and deep forest. I was under the naïve, very naïve, notion that I could find refuge with the Red Army by crossing the front. I ran into two fellow-mates, Polish Jews from my camp Gleiwitz-Drei, who seemed to have had the same idea. With overcast and no sun it was difficult to keep direction. Crossing the front was really a dumb idea. It was an impossible proposition. First we would have had to penetrate the German artillery line, each heavy gun usually protected by machine-gun nests. Then some infantry, then no-men's land, and then the Russian lines. We were to find out. We had been walking all day, difficult in deep snow. It got dark and we saw the salvos of the artillery ahead light up the eastern sky and we could hear the distant boom of the guns. We stopped to spend the night. We made a bed of twigs and were lying down next to each other. The two on the outside to take turns, and sleep in the center, the only "warm" place. The next morning we stubbornly continued. I just had scaled a 5 foot barbed wire fence when the high pitch sound of modern machine-gun fire stopped me cold. I let myself fall to the ground and waited. After a while, as fast as I could I climbed back over the fence, and ran back into the forest. So did my colleagues. We decided to try and take refuge in a nearby village. We reconnoitered, and found a farm house with barns and a hayloft removed from the center of the village. We sneaked into the hayloft, and fell asleep. The farmer's wife knew she had "visitors". The farmer was not around, his wife and daughter and a Polish farm worker were the sole inhabitants. They, as well as we expected the Russians shortly. They may have done it out of the goodness of their hearts, but, I suspect the farmers felt giving Jews

shelter may help sway the Russians. I was still holding on to the light box given to me earlier by the Commander's side-kick. I used it as a "pillow" With the Commander gone I got rid of it, but opened it anyway. It contained 2,000 cigarettes. Now I, we, were rich, moreover, I did not smoke. Meanwhile German soldiers were still around. We had passed a few dead ones along our way lying well preserved in the sub-zero temperatures on the snow-covered ground. I tried to replace my wooden shoes taking the boots of one corpse, however, they were frozen solid. I watched them through the cracks between the logs of the loft, two German soldiers. They had come to fill their mattresses with hay. If they would have found us we would have been shot. The Pole who worked for the German farmers brought us food. Resting, that is not moving for days made every joint in my body ache. I just had to roll with the punch, and put my brain into "idle" While dozing I heard an engine noise I could not identify. I knew the noise of German tanks, and I hoped this probably was a Russian engine --- it was. Looking through the cracks in the log wall I saw the Russian tanks pass close, just a few feet from the hayloft. They were covered with white bed sheets to camouflage them against air attacks. The one hanging from the long cannon barrel made the tank look like a monster, however I was glad, very glad, to see them. Now we moved into the kitchen of the farm house. The floor neither wood nor tiles, it was hard dirt. The walls were thick, the windows, small squares were decorated with little curtains. We were sitting around the kitchen table. I spoke German with the farmers wife, and my colleagues Polish with the Polish farm worker. They were all very poor. The front door flew open. In came good looking Russians dressed in perfect fur-lined leather uniforms and fur-heads. With them was a Polish interpreter, probably secret police.

They were looking for Germans. We had no documents, Germans could have been hiding in Jewish prison garb, but my colleagues in perfect Polish explained to the Polish policeman who we were and I heard him say to the Russians: "To som dobre chlapce" These are good guys. They left, and I took a deep breath of relief.

We could not hit the road yet. It was too dangerous to walk without documents. Moreover, when I spoke Czech, which is related to Russian, I had an unmistakable German accent. I spoke French without any accent, but there were not many Frenchmen out there. My two colleagues just wanted to go home -- as if they still had a home? But, what else could they do. Where else could they go? The danger lurking particularly for Polish Jews returning was beyond belief. After barely surviving four years of Nazi horror Jews from the Polish city of Kielce returned and 42 of them were murdered by Christian Poles!

There was a silent understanding between the German SS and the local Polish population. They remained passive, and so cooperated in the killing of the "reprobate" Jews. In return they received from the German SS valuables taken from the Jews. This was underscored in Kielce where on July 4, 1946, more than a year after the fall of Nazi Germany, 42 Holocaust survivors were murdered and 50 wounded in a pogrom. Kielce Poles had received from the Germans Jewish homes and belongings, and did not want to return them to the Jewish owners who had returned. The pretext for the massacre was an accusation that the Jews had killed a Polish boy and used his blood to bake matzoth.

My plan was to walk to Gleiwitz the nearest large town. however, we stayed put, it was still too dangerous. The Farmer's wife gave us a room with three beds. A day after the well organized and disciplined

tank troops of the Red Army had come and gone we heard a car in the yard. A drunken Red Army soldier with his automatic gun, the characteristic round magazine attached, staggered into the kitchen. Reeking of alcohol he first shouted "davai chasi" Give me your watch. Then he searched for alcohol. The woman did not seem to have any and the soldier became angry, and we became frightened. The daughter had been hiding. He found her under the bed in the adjacent room and raped her. He then promptly fell asleep. Another car drove up. A soldier almost braking down the door entered and shouted "Davai chasy". It was laughable, but I did not laugh. He looked around and planted himself, feet apart, in front of the small kitchen window and tore the shabby curtains off the curtain rod, lecturing us by spitting out one word: "Bourgeois"!! To calm him the woman gave him something to eat. I stepped into the yard to look at his vehicle. It looked strange. It was the first Jeep I ever saw. To adapt it to the Russian winter a wooden box enclosure covered the normally open Jeep. The seats were covered with Persian rugs cut down neatly to fit them. The wood-box had two little square windows, one on each side and each was decorated with a curtain --- Bourgeois?

The Russian foot soldiers, stood in stark contrast to the Tank troops. They looked like a ragged band who seemed to live off the land they had conquered, pardon me, "liberated". They did not like their own uniforms and dressed in what ever they found and took a liking to. A mix of a sailor's and Forester's outfit was not unusual. They had a passion to pick as target the white insulators carrying the telephone wires. Later special troops came by to replace them. Once I saw them hunting a rabbit with a machine-gun, probably killing a comrade. I saw him fall, lying on the ground, motionless, the man, not the rabbit. If they were

not drunk they were, sometimes, like children. Their automatic weapons were black, they are anodized so they did not show up at night, and so they can be buried without rusting. I observed a soldier sandpaper the black layer off to make it shiny. Later, in Karlsbad a soldier took his horse up one flight to a photographer to have his picture taken sitting on it. They sang beautifully. I often saw and heard them singing standing tightly on a moving truck: "Rasvetali jablony u grushi, poplili tumany nad rekoi..." Extraordinary!

All their trucks were 10 wheel American made. They had received them through "Lend Lease". It was these trucks which allowed them to follow on the heels of the retreating Germans. As a rule the Russian driver started his truck in direct drive, burning the clutch. Shifting, that's for beginners they implied. Later, for a short time I served in the Red army in a communications division where few could read or write, which made for poor communication. On my travels I crossed a village which seemed more destroyed than the others. It was "Cop" (Tshop) in eastern Slovakia. Villagers told me čop had large wine-cellars. The retreating Germans deliberately left these cellars well stocked. About 5 hours after the Russians entered Tsop the Germans retook it without firing a shot. All the Russians were dead drunk. The Germans repeated this deception successfully until there was no wine left. About a week after the Red Army had passed through Föhrenggrund, our village, I and my two Polish mates took off for Gleiwitz. We were stopped once. One of the Red Army soldiers suspected me of being a German. I was not able to say anything, but my comrades speaking a mixture of Polish and Russian talked him out of it. If I had been alone, I probably would not be here.

AN ABANDONED TOWN

My two Polish comrades left for their village and I entered Gleiwitz alone, a city normally populated by 300,000, now empty. There was not much damage to the buildings, but a few were still smoldering. I roamed the city when I spotted three characters in familiar prison garb. They turned out to be Tommy and company. I was, overjoyed. They too had just arrived. Now we joined forces to find a place to live. We found a villa in the suburbs. It had electricity because it was near a hospital. We moved in and to be left alone attached a Czech flag to the door. We now started a strange existence. First we had to find food. Tommy and I "liberated" a children's carriage to use as shopping cart. We went "shopping" from building to building, door to door, floor to floor. The apartment buildings were high and the elevators, of course not running. Usually we walked to the top floor. With street-level, parterre, and hoch-parterre there were all together 8 floors. From the top we worked our way down. All doors had been forced open. Our predecessors, the Red Army, had been looking for liquor and hidden treasure. They left us plenty of food. Canned goods, pickled eggs, condensed milk, Pudding powder, salt, some sugar, and more. Russians cut open loudspeakers, took apart pianos. Walking home one evening in pitch dark, we heard a noise we haven't heard in years, the unmistakable noise of high heels. On the side-walk ahead of us. A young woman. Speaking German we invited her to our "home". She felt we were gentlemen, and she stayed for 8 days and nights. Inge would have stayed for ever. She took me to her home a nice place. She gave me clothes, pants, a jacket, shirt, and shoes, (photo). I bid my striped pajama goodbye. She also gave me a Rolleiflex, but there was no film! She really had nowhere to go

and wanted to stay with us, she even cut off her hair to look Jewish just released from a concentration camp. For a week, we led this strange life when the Red Army Police, the KGB, told us that we had to move on to Krakow. We found a map and discovered that the first stop to get there would be Kattowice, 20 km away. We closed up our Gleiwitz villa, the first place of "civilized" life after years of imprisonment, and walked to Kattowice. At the railroad station the next train for Krakow was leaving at 12:01pm, and at 12:01 we left. To Krakow it was 100 km. It should have been a two hour trip, but after half an hour we stopped. A conductor walked through and announced: the bridge ahead is out, and we have to cross the valley and river on foot. There will be a train on the other side to take us to Krakow. We were lucky, there was no river, but there also was no train on the other side. After a four hour wait we finally saw the locomotive's head-light. When it came to a stop it turned out to be a Russian munitions train manned by Red Army soldiers. "Davai suda" they shouted. Now, what did they want ? It was simple. We had to unload the heavy munitions from the box-cars and carry it in to a nearby low tree forest. Then we could board the train for Krakow. Each bomb weighed about 50 pounds. After 3 hours the job was done. We were permitted to board the train. After a few hours in a cattle car, no cattle, but lots of cattle dung, we got to Krakow after midnight.

* * *

A WOUND THAT NEVER HEALS

The difference between concentration camps and death-camps is stark and forbidding. Concentration camps ranged from relatively good to very bad. Dachau, was good. It actually was the best camp, where nearly 80% survived. Nevertheless, our dumb media called it a death-camp. It sounds better in a headline. In a real death-camp, for instance Belzec, of 600,000 Jews none survived. My parents' last message came from Komarov a little town near Belzec. I have no doubt they perished there. And I am afraid I also know the details of their death.

Jan Karski was a secret courier for the Polish government in exile in London. Late in 1942 he prepared a trip to report to London. The Jewish underground in Poland arranged for Karski to be smuggled into the Belzec extermination camp to give the western leaders an eye-witness account. The Jewish underground paid off an Estonian guard, to give Karski his papers and uniform. Karski was assured that chaos and panic prevailed at the camp to such an extent, that there was no chance his disguise would be uncovered.

Karski successfully completed his dangerous mission and wrote a harrowing report: "to die in agony" In his last paragraph Karski wrote:

"The images of what I saw in the death camp are, I am afraid, my permanent possessions. I would like nothing better than to purge my mind of these memories. For one thing the recollection of those events invariably brings on a recurrence of the nausea. But more than that, I would like to be simply free of them, to obliterate the very thought that they ever occurred."

Only a few weeks after his horrifying experiences, early 1943, Jan Karski stood in the White House reporting to the President what he had

witnessed in Belzec. Nevertheless Roosevelt, to the best of my knowledge did nothing.

David Wyman, in his book "Abandonment of the Jews" observes:

"Roosevelt, without risking more than minute costs to the war effort, could have ordered the War Department to stand ready to spare some bomb tonnage for the two railroads leading to Auschwitz, and the gas chambers themselves".

Wyman, continued "...as it happened, on ten different days from July through October 1944, (emphasis mine) when Auschwitz exterminations reached their peak with 21, 000 Jews killed in one day, a total of 2,700 bombers carrying 6,600 tons of bombs traveled over, the rail lines and the gas chambers, on their way to oil targets in the Blechhammer-Auschwitz region."

I under-lined October 1944 because I was there, a prisoner in Auschwitz, in camp B2b, a few hundred yards from the gas chambers. On October 6, I saw a squadron of bombers, little silvery dots at great height, flying exactly over the gas chambers in a westerly direction suddenly all hell broke out. Almost next to me, the German anti-aircraft cannons opened fire nearly braking my eardrums. The next day, October 7, 1944. I was lying on my bunk, when a "Himmelfahrt Commando" committed an act of desperation. First I heard two muffled explosions. A while later, a few hundred yards from the crematoria, machine gun fire broke out and continued for some time. A "Himmelfahrt Commando" had blown up Crematorium-III, tossed a sadistic Kapo into the oven, killed several SS men, and wounded a number of others. These desperate men did what the Allied bombers should have done the day before, bombed the extermination machinery. The commando was hunted down to the last man.

Roosevelt had other occasions to help Jews but chose not to. The reason for his “passivity” was probably the fact that he had to deal with an anti-Semitic Congress. They would not have looked kindly on supporting Jews.

while all of Europe had a black-out, offenders could expect capital punishment. But, the flaming chimneys of Auschwitz were an exception. They could be seen from a great distance. by bombers flying at 22,000 feet. The “burning Jews” could have served as a beacon to find and destroy the extermination facilities at night. P38 dive bombers could have precision bombed it. Let me point out that the flames were nothing but a manifestation of an ordinary Chimney-fire caused by their uninterrupted day and night use. Fat from the corpses accumulated inside, on the chimney walls. There was no time to clean them, as Rudolf Hoess the Commandant of Auschwitz confirms in his auto-biography:

“The German air defense constantly complained to us about the night fires visible in the air from a great distance. But we had to burn at night too, not to hold up the arriving transports.”

* * *

KRAKOW

Krakow is the third largest city in Poland and a major rail junction with connections to Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, and Vienna. It is medieval and picturesque. We slept in a school and the next morning I was eager to find a post-office, to let my sister know I had survived, but I was unable to mail a letter to anywhere let alone the United States. Moreover I did not have her correct address.

Eastern Silesia contained many POW camps, Jewish slave camps, and foreign labor camps. Thousands of prisoners of many nationalities were freed when the Red Army over-ran these camps. The Soviets concentrated the inmates by nationality to send them home. I went to the Czechoslovak assembly point and when we were about 500 or more we were put on a train. The first two cars were a kitchen and a food-storage car followed by about 50 box-cars. Each of these had bunks for 10 to 15 men. In the center of each boxcar stood a stove with a stove-pipe sticking out the roof.

It was late January 1945. Our destination was Uzhorod, a city in the eastern tip of Czechoslovakia which had already been liberated. The last one to board our car was the one we needed least. I watched him. He sat down on his bunk and casually brushed Lice of his lapel, a sign he was completely infested. His hair, eyebrows and body, and it meant that we will be infested too. "Bon voyage"!?

It was not very cold and we kept the large sliding door of the box-car wide open. I kept staring at the passing scenery. Images of the past flashed through my mind mixed with thoughts of an uncertain, hopefully bright, future. I was 27, insecure, and eager to "settle down", but where? Get my designer-draftsman job back at Bata in Czechoslovakia,

or emigrate and join my sister in New York. .At our frequent stops we jumped out to stretch or use the occasion to empty the bowels. Sometimes a stop lasted hours, and sometimes only minutes. The problem was to anticipate the trains departure which took place without warning. It was difficult to catch up with pants hanging down. In the evening the train stopped and we got out , walked up front to the kitchen to get something to eat. The Red Army food was surprisingly good. The next morning I knew we were coming into a large city because I heard and felt the crossing of many tracks. We stopped, slid the door open and discovered we were in Lvov, a large Polish city, now Russian. Directly across on the adjacent track stood a flat-top RR car with a "monster " on it. It looked awkward, what the hell was it ? My curiosity for machinery got the better of me. I jumped out and climbed on top of it. it looked like a monstrous bomb, about 15 foot long, 3 feet in diameter, and sticking out on one side what looked like a jet-engine. It turned out to be a V-One, Germany's very secret weapon, a flying bomb. The Soviets shipped it home for investigation. Another day of stop and go and we arrived at our destination, Uzhorod.

* * *

OUR SOVIET “FRIENDS”

The Czechoslovak government had sunk millions into Uzhorod. It was the capitol of a region, encompassing the eastern tip of Czechoslovakia. It was modern, well kept, and attractive. Shortly, after a rigged plebiscite, this eastern region and its capitol Uzhorod was to become a part of the Soviet Union. No, the Soviets had no scruples about grabbing a part of “fraternal” Czechoslovakia and incorporated it into the USSR.

First, we lined up for de-lousing which we badly needed. Then we lined up to be questioned by the NKVD, the Soviet secret Police. They wanted to know what my plans were. First, I’ll go to Prague, but, when I mentioned I might emigrate to the United States they wanted to know where my relatives lived. I told them in New York, but, they wanted to know the names and addresses of my relatives living, not in America, but in Czechoslovakia ! I told them they were all killed, but they did not believe me. Their intention was simply to use my Czech relatives as hostages to blackmail me abroad. This may sound unreal, but the secret police diligently collect information which may never be used, but does pay off if the right time comes. I had no relatives left in Czechoslovakia, but many Czechs, Slovaks, or Hungarians who emigrated to the States did. Some emigrants landed important jobs in the States, even became members of the House, and Senate . They were potential victims of blackmail. In other words the secret police could threaten to kill or imprison relatives of these VIPs, unless, of course, they cooperated – that is helped to “build Socialism”. This was just part of the Cold War, started by Stalin long before 1945. For instance, with the killing of Polish intellectuals. It is commonly

assumed that Polish intellectuals were killed by Hitler. But most were killed by Stalin, Roosevelt's "buddy". For instance in the "Katyn Massacre".

In April 1940 in the Katyn forest near Smolensk on Stalin's orders 15,000 Polish officers were shot in the back of the head by the NKVD. For years Stalin, and the NY Times in lock-step, blamed the Germans for this mass murder, but all evidence pointed to the Soviets. Not until premier Gorbachev acknowledged the mass-murder, fifty years after it happened did American Fellow-travelers, Liberals, Democrats, and Communists grudgingly admitted that Stalin was the culprit.

Another of the many massacres of Poles again perpetrated by Stalin. During the "Warsaw uprising" against the retreating Germans. On January 5, 1944 Moscow Radio broadcast this appeal: "People of Warsaw, to arms! The whole population must gather around the National Assembly and the Underground Army. Attack the Germans, stop them from destroying public buildings! Assist the Red Army in crossing the Vistula."

Little did General Bor-Komorowsky, the Polish Commander realize that this radio appeal by Moscow was Stalin's ruse to destroy the Polish Underground Army which was anti-Communist. Bor-Komorowsky followed suit and within 5 days Warsaw was liberated. However, with the Polish Army fighting inside Warsaw the sensational advance of the Soviet Army had suddenly come to an equally sensational halt at the Vistula, a few miles east of Warsaw. There the Soviet Army waited for three months until the Polish Army was wiped out by the counter attacking Germans. 200,000 Poles (!!) lost their lives. Sure, Hitler killed Poles, so did Stalin, but on a much larger scale.

A VACATION IN THE MOUNTAINS

My plan now was to return first to Prague, but $\frac{3}{4}$ of Czechoslovakia was still in German hands. Of course there were no trains or buses. Bridges and tunnels were destroyed. The rail road tracks had been ripped out and physically removed. The ones which were still on the ground were destroyed by a contrivance I observed in action. Pulled by a locomotive, It broke each tie in half. Tunnels were rendered useless by locomotives sent into the tunnel from opposite ends to collide. I would have to hitch-hike, behind the advancing Soviets.

From Uzhorod a train was still running to Michalovce, 40 km west. We took it. There we were put up in a school. But, the locals, "fellow-Slovaks", became apprehensive with all those Jews in their "backyard".

There was a solution to this imminent "danger". Have those damn Jews drafted into the Army to fight the retreating Germans. In no time Soviet officers appeared to draft us into the Czech legion of the Red Army, a legion in which no Czech was spoken, only Russian. So, we new-comers were slated to be cannon-fodder. After 42 months imprisonment? they got to be kidding --- they weren't. I was drafted into a communication division. There was plenty of captured German communication equipment around. The bottle-neck was that most of the Russians in this division could neither read nor write. How was this possible after "building Socialism" for so many years ? The next day I got my marching-orders. I was to report to the Soviet-Czech commander in Poprad, about 160 km to the west. I walked and hitch-hiked on horse drawn vehicles most of the way spending nights at farmers.

In Poprad I discovered, however, that a famous ski resort in the Tatra mountains, was only a few km north. Moreover, up the mountain was a hotel, The "Orava", maintained by UNRRA, an American UN organization to help war survivors in need. War survivors in need?? Hurrah!, that's me! Without a moments hesitation. I decided the Soviet Army would have to get along without me. I ran up the mountain road. Little villas and mansions left and right. After an hour I reached the hotel. First class, beautiful, each room had a large balcony and a great view. I had no documents, nothing, but they accepted my Auschwitz tattoo as proof, and I checked in, as a guest of UNRRA. At the hotel were a few survivors. Hanka and I, I knew her from Prague, had no problems after barely surviving the horror of industrial extermination, to merge into the "good life". We were both in good shape, not in need of a vacation, but forced to wait for Prague to be liberated. We stayed three weeks, after which we decided to hitch-hike to Prague, about 500 km west. I had a serious handicap. I spoke fluent Czech, but with a German accent, which at the time could have been a fatal affliction. Oddly, nobody liked the Germans. Jews with a German accent had two strikes against them. I just kept my mouth shut and let Hanka do the talking. She did not even speak German. It was easy for her to convince a Soviet army driver of a 10 wheel American made truck with a load of full gasoline barrels to give both of us a lift to Olomouce, half way to Prague. She sat next to the driver and I settled in on top of the barrels. It was a wild ride. I, on top of the barrels, was way off the center of gravity!! In curves this load shifted dangerously and I held on for life. Moreover, one of the barrels leaked gasoline. I tried to rotate it so the barrel's spout would be facing up, too heavy, no success. All I needed now was one little spark, or a lit match, or a lit cigarette, when

we suddenly stopped. Villagers warned our race-driver that Germans were still hiding in the forest ahead. But nothing could stop him. He continued and I knew one little bullet would send us, particularly me, to smithereens. All I can say now: "My number, was still not up". We got "safely" to Olmouce. Hanka and I went sightseeing. Everybody was staring at us. They could not place us. We certainly did not look like locals, tanned (Wind-burned) and fit, but we did not look like survivors either. We spent a night in the basement of a school and the next morning took a train, the first one to run again, to Prague. It was March 1945.

* * *

BACK IN PRAGUE

Freedom, civilian life, after 3 ½ years imprisonment, was an extraordinary experience, breathtaking, intense, exhilarating. Prague appeared unchanged. First, I had to find a place to stay. I found one in Ditta's home. Her father had not returned, but her mother, not Jewish, had kept the apartment. Second, I went to my parent's apartment house. Neighbors, of a "mixed" marriage, had kept their apartment. They had helped my parents, two years earlier leaving and told me the landlord had been nasty to them, another Czech "weasel", as I call them. I looked for him. Couldn't find the swine. I still wore the clothes Inge, the German girl in Gleiwitz, had given me. They were disintegrating. My parents had left my clothes with a Czech family. I knew their address. When I rang the doorbell the son opened. He wore my suit. I left without saying a word.

Walking the streets of Prague I met friends and acquaintances. There was my flying pal and friend from Zlin, the photographer Karel Ludwig. He had remained in Prague throughout the war, but, did not look well, and had lost some of his hair and seemed to have suffered psychologically during the occupation. It must have been suffocating for a creative person. He now had a big photo-studio in the Lucerna building in the center of town. He told me he was preparing a photo trip to leave shortly for Germany, would I like to join him? I would.

I will never forget my encounter with Frank, the stunning looking man who greeted me on my arrival in Theresienstadt. It was now March or May 1945, In the center of town, he was crossing Na Prikopê, Prague's "Rodeo Drive". He had lost 50 pounds, could hardly walk, and had grotesquely swollen ankles. He had survived a so called starvation

march, Hungermarsch. Again and again I realized how lucky I had been. This encounter was followed by many similar ones, old friends who had barely survived.

Czechs who had been bombed out or concentration camp survivors were entitled to a Nazi apartment now confiscated and sealed by the Police. I applied, but needed a partner. I found Zdenek Tmej, another Czech photographer I knew from before the war. I met him at Ludwig's studio. He wanted to share the apartment with me. He was not Jewish, never went to a concentration camp, but spent time in a forced foreign labor camp in Germany. There he photographed surreptitiously the brothel the Germans added to almost each of the foreign labor camps. They were staffed with Jewish women taken from Auschwitz. Tmej's heart wrenching pictures still haunt me. They were published in Prague in 1946 in a book aptly titled "Soul on vacation".

At "home", in Ditta's apartment, I met the first American GI. He would be happy, he said, to take a letter to New York, but he had to leave in ten minutes. I wrote a short note to my sister which she received, a month later in May 1945. It was the first sign of life she got from her family in four years.

There were survivors who felt guilty of having survived. I did not. The first weeks in Prague I felt like a dream walker, and time went by like a dream. My sadness was overwhelmed with the joy of being alive. However, my urge to "bear witness" to the horrors was strong. This urge was amplified by people who after the war for political - ideological reasons spread falsehoods about what had happened to the Jews. It was shortly after my return to Prague that I rented a typewriter to write a 30 page report to my sister in New York, and my uncle

in London about what had happened to our family. Seven members including my parents died in Hitler's gas-chambers.

In May 1945 there were no Germans left in Prague. Pilsen, only 100km north, had been liberated by the Americans. We were eagerly waiting for them to liberate Prague, however, in Yalta, Roosevelt had given this privilege to Stalin, and so handed him all of Czechoslovakia on a silver-platter. Within three years, on February 25, 1948, Czechoslovakia became a Soviet satellite. The Americans in Pilzen did not move and the Red Army came closer and closer. I, and hundreds of Czechs, were standing on Wacлавski Namesti the main square in the center of Prague. Groups had formed around men who argued, and argued. I stepped closer to listen to what they had to say. The Americans, the man propounded, had deliberately stopped in Pilzen, they wanted more Czechs to be killed by the retreating Germans. These men were Communist agent - provocateurs. It was May 1945, long before the Americans "started the cold war", as our American born Communists maintained. The Red Army finally came. I knew what to expect, but many did not. Some learned the hard way, like after welcoming them, returning home to find it ransacked. I was notified that an apartment had become available. My partner Zdenek Tmej and I went to Provaznicka number nine, in the center of town, to meet the policeman who would brake the seals and let us in. It was a modern building. We took the elevator to the 4th floor. The policeman opened the door. The air was stale, food was still on the dining room table. Who ever occupied this apartment left in a hurry. I looked around. It could be a nice place, but needed furniture and work. I moved in 3 weeks later and discovered that it had been used as a retreat, by Joachim von Ribbentrop, Hitler's foreign minister. I found

letters addressed to him, and Hitler's "Mein Kampf" dedicated to "Joachim". I found all anti-Jewish passages had been underlined with a red pencil. , but I do not recall what I did with it.

* * *

WOMAN OF THE WORLD

Before the war Anni lived in world-famous Karlsbad. Anni, like my mother, came from Iglau, and was a close friend of my parents. I remember meeting her the first time in Vienna in 1922. I was 5 years old, and must have been attracted to her because she told me that I was stroking her ankles. She was always elegant. A woman of the world with exquisite taste, spending her summers with her friend Cipriani, owner of Harry's bar, in Venice, well traveled, sophisticated, and gracious. She was 47 when she faced Doctor Mengele in Auschwitz. As a rule her "advanced" age would have been a death sentence, but Mengele sensed something and sent her to the "right". Anni survived.

We met in Prague, embraced, and sat down in a little café. With her good looks, just disregarding her age, she had survived Auschwitz and was now in good shape. We always liked each other and I elected her to be my aunt. She said she was looking for an apartment and added she had left her furniture and clothes for safe-keeping with her maid in Karlsbad. "Stop looking", I said, offering my apartment, but don't count on getting your furniture back from your maid. I was wrong, her Czech maid returned everything including the lipsticks Anni had left in the drawers. A few weeks later the furniture arrived. It was grand, mostly antique. Anni supervised everything and our apartment became a graceful home. Zdenek Tmej, my partner had changed his mind. He now did not want to stay in Prague. He went to capture devastated Germany with his camera.

Anni and I led now an exciting life greatly enhanced by our deprivation of over three years, and by parcels arriving from the States,

sent by my sister. They contained Coffee and cigarettes. At the time the international currency, and we had lots of it.

I decided to emigrate. At the passport office I was told that in order to get a passport I had to first do my military duty. My military duty !?? Yessiree, after 3 ½ years concentration camps I was told to join the officer's school, duration three years! I discovered, however, that if I joined as an ordinary soldier I would have to serve only 6 months. Moreover, born in 1917 I had to serve only five months. I had no better choice and enlisted. My place of service was Kutna Hora, a small city 60km south of Prague.

In September 1945 I became a Czech soldier in the first Czechoslovak post-war army. Czech uniforms were not available as yet. Our uniforms were German. My belt buckle was adorned with a Swastika. With my experiences the military service was children's play. Amused, I observed the newly enlisted, like apprehensive children, ask question upon question. I gave them the answer I always got in Auschwitz. "Not to worry, all your questions will be answered soon. Serving in the army was a drag. In the evening, before falling asleep on my bunk I used to call out the number of days left for me to serve. Like One hundred and seventeen. If it seemed high, I consoled myself by announcing my neighbor's four digit number, he was in for three years.

After a few weeks in Kutna Hora I was transferred to the "Petrin" adjacent to the Hradcin the beautiful castle overlooking the river Vltava and the city. I do not recall what tricks I played to be transferred, because the Petrin was the most desired location to serve as soldier. At 6pm I used to run down the mountain over meadows and walk-ways to catch the number eleven trolley. Within a few minutes I was home, to shed my uniform, which of course, was verboten, and take Annie or

friends out to a restaurant or night-club. However, I had to be back before midnight on the Petrin. I missed my dead-line once and returned at 6am. I contemplated my transgression during my house arrest on two consecutive weekends in my barrack.

I asked for a 3 day pass, to visit the Bata Comp. In Zlin, the company I used to work for before the war. I wanted to explore the possibilities of getting my old job back. I checked into the Spolecensky dum, the hotel where I used to live. The little waiter (a dwarf) who had underlined with a red pencil all anti-Jewish passages in the newspapers he handed the guest was still there. I lifted him up, but, changed my mind, and put him back down gently. The next day I met with my former colleague Engineer Guida. Oh sure I can have my old job back, but, I would have to join the Communist Party. I was not surprised. After Roosevelt had given Prague to Stalin for "Liberation" I knew that one day the whole country will go down the toilet, and become communist. I returned to Prague. A few days later I met Blanca on the street pushing a children's carriage. "What's this??" I ask pointing at the baby. "It's Tommy's". Tommy? I saw him a few weeks ago somewhere in eastern Slovakia. Oh, do you know where he is, she said, because he does not know we have a daughter. I knew he was serving in Slovakia in the Czech army. I ask for another 3 days pass to travel to Slovakia to retrieve a Rolleiflex I had left in Michalovce, and to give Tommy the news. I traveled for 11 hours east. I found Tommy. I told him he was a father, and he responded sadly: "So, I am a father now, when I really need one myself". He was nineteen, and his father had not returned. When Tommy returned to Prague he married Blanca to make his daughter legitimate. He jokingly used to add: "I was married three days because Monday was a holiday." She grew up in communist Czechoslovakia,

however, she did not become a good Communist, and escaped in the seventies to her father in Caracas.

Soon, I was to see the light at the end of the tunnel. In February 1945 I demobilized. I got my Czech passport, and devoted full time to getting the US visa. My sister secured me passage on the Gripsholm of Swedish-American Line, leaving from Goetheborg in March. I spent the last four weeks, waiting for my visa in Karlsbad, a beautiful spot.

The four weeks in Karlsbad, a place my parents used to visit when we were “suddenly rich”, went by fast. I went to Karlsbad with Elli. She had been in the camp too. She was a lovely woman, however, I was too young and immature for her. Nevertheless I have very fond memories of our relationship. I remember the name of our hotel in Karlsbad. It was Rübezahl. I knew this name from my childhood. It means a giant. In German folklore it was a huge mythical being, usually humanlike in form. Karlsbad came to a sudden end when the American Consulate informed me from Prag that my visa had come through. I returned to Prague. I said goodbye to my friends, wonderful Annie and the wonderful apartment we shared. (Annie was soon to come to the States) I never forgot Karel Ludwig’s facial expression. It was not envious. Just sad. He said: In no time you’ll be in New York, and I knew his thoughts: “And I will be rotting here”. Soon the Communists took over Czechoslovakia to bury this country and its people alive for many years.

* * *

STOCKHOLM

I flew from Prague to Stockholm where I stayed in a small hotel. Stockholm was beautiful, vibrant, the food incredibly good. Stockholm was my first post war visit to a city, unaffected by the war. I saw my first post-war movies. Danny Kaye's "Walter Mitty" and Greta Garbo's "Grand Hotel"? I bought jazz records and sent them back to friends in Prague. I bought an American looking hat. It was \$12.00, about \$12.00 more than I could afford. After a week I took the train to Göteborg to board the Gripsholm for New York. It was my first ocean crossing. I shared my cabin with another young man. I think he was Swedish. The crossing was exciting. Most passengers were young, mostly Danes and Swedes. There was also Bente, a golf-champion. Then came the big day: March 1946 when I saw America for the first time. It was the Brooklyn coast. The highway along the coast was lit with fog lights, very yellow lighting, endless traffic, cars and more cars. Inexperienced, I had no idea I was supposed to leave a tip for the bell-boy. I did not, I did not have a dime.

I do not recall many details of my first encounter with family. I believe it was too emotion-packed. I remember four relatives at the Pier. My sister, her husband Ernst, aunt Hedy and a little man, my father's brother Edmund who had come from Chicago where he worked for a bus company. I had never met him before. Upon leaving the pier we drove by the Empire State on 34 street. What struck me was the size of the entrance doors to the tallest building in the world. They were small, and I expected them to be super-sized portals. I joined my sister and brother in law in Woodmere L.I. where they had a nice home. Within a few days we left for the Catskills for a short vacation. I wanted to see

America that is New York, however, Edith and Ernst thought I should first recover, but, from what? Karlsbad? The Gripsholm? We all went to Fleischman's and stayed at the "Majestic" Hotel. It seemed a nostalgic place where the guests created for themselves what they hoped was a European mountain environment. I was an outsider, usually sitting in a corner listening to this "horrible" music, American Jazz, on the radio.

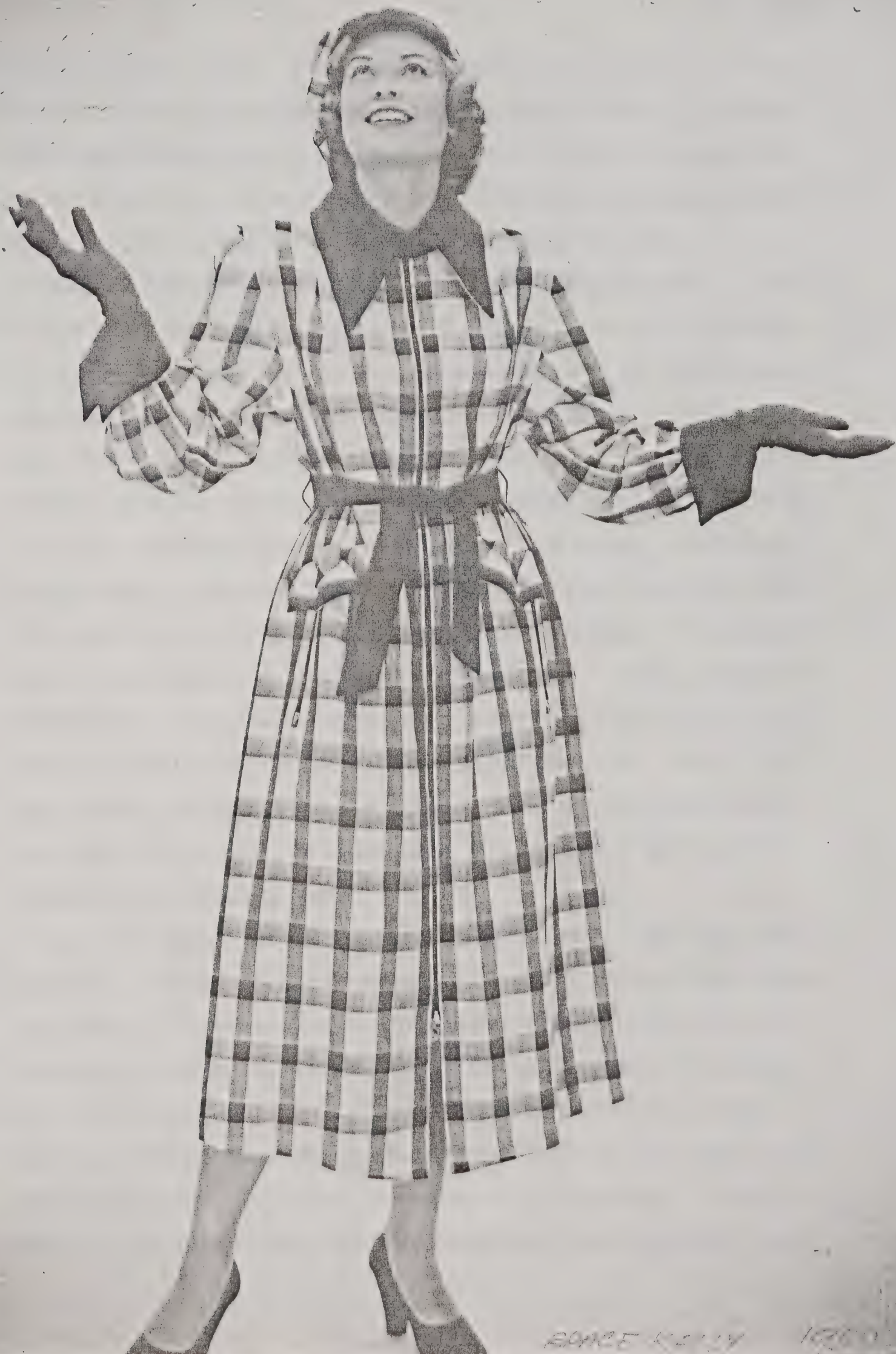
I "recovered" in the "mountains" but, I was filled with anxieties. Almost thirty, which I thought was very old. Will I succeed, as an engineer, or as photographer? Or what? I had survived the horror, but had no security, none, aggravated by a lack of self-esteem. Filled with wrong values instilled in my childhood.

* * *

MY FIRST JOB

Soon I found a job as a photographer's assistant. It paid \$ 60.00 a week. My boss, Mr. Herstatt, Jewish from Germany, came to the States before the war. He was not an artist, he was a very commercial man with a photo studio on east 35th street. I thoroughly learned the commercial trade using large format cameras. We photographed for department stores and catalogues. From stills to fashion, from kitchen appliances -- to Grace Kelly (photo). She booked, I believe, through Hartford model agency and posed for fashion at \$15.00 an hour. She was incredibly beautiful. Particularly in profile and $\frac{3}{4}$ profile. We, Herstatt and I, liked working with her and she was booked two, three times a week. Sometimes, after the shoot, I gave her a lift. She lived at the Barbizon for women on Lexington avenue, if she did not stay in Philadelphia. I never thought she would make it in film because of her unappealing voice. But in spite of the fact that I am always right --- ask my wife --- I was wrong. Her death was tragic and strange. I believe it was due to a clash of cultures, her American freedoms versus restrictive European customs which contributed to her untimely end.

At Herstatt I had one particularly interesting job. I traveled to Kentucky and West Virginia to photograph for the Pitstone Coal Corporation's 1947 stockholders report. Unprepared I got into the American "Hinterland" far removed from anything I had ever seen or known about the States. My English was poor, and my photo equipment was worse. Herstatt gave me one camera an 8x10 inch camera with one lens and a 4x5 reduction back. And I took my Rolleiflex, a camera my brother in law had given me. The Rollei was adequate but it too has only one lens. And the 8x10 Camera is bulky, really unsuitable for generally



SPACE KELLY 1955

industrial location work. Later, when I worked for myself, I went on industrial jobs with two Hasselblads and a choice of about 8 different focal-length lenses and an assistant. On the Pitstone Coal job I had nobody to help me. It was difficult to carry the awkward equipment plus flashbulb lighting and a tripod. I rented a car and drove south.

I had been just over a year in this country, speaking English? -- well I thought I was speaking English and driving, as I was told, to Dante a city in Virginia near the Kentucky border located in the Appalachian mountains. Of course I had never heard of Appalachia, not to mention Dante, but I did associate this name with "Hell" so I was prepared. I believe it took me two days to get there. Dante, with a population of 750, was an administration center for nearby coal mines. Dante was a strange place, a strange name, no Purgatory nor Paradise in site. The U.S. post office of Dante was on stilts. It looked strange. The people spoke, what seemed to me, a strange language. I was unable to understand a single word, moreover, the locals looked at me and treated me with great suspicion. I discovered later why. I had a thick accent and my car had a New York license plate. with attributes like this one should not venture into Appalachia. It was shortly before John L. Lewis declared a general strike.

I can not forget my first descent into the mine. with my bulky equipment I descended at great speed to over a thousand feet in an open elevator. I stepped out into the horizontal shaft to walk to its end schlepping my cameras. At the end of the shaft stood a tremendous low, 20 foot long and 7 foot wide machine attended by two miners, I must have walked about 40 minutes. But, I could not walk erect, the shaft's ceiling was only 5 feet, the width of the coal layer. It was hot, nearly 90, but luckily holes had been drilled into the ceiling and I could

stretch myself ever so often to relief my aching back. How does one photograph black miners in a coal mine? With the mining machine moved back 20 feet on its tracks I set up my 8x10 camera facing the end of the shaft. I placed the miners with their tools. Then my two flashbulbs from the left and right lighting the end of the shaft behind the two miners. The photo showed the men in silhouette against a layer of glistening coal with their helmet lights showing well. It was of course in black and white, a good photo, I couldn't have done it better today. I was proud of it. Let me add the miners assured me that my flash bulbs would not set off an explosion. I took many more photos.

Driving home I stopped in Washington D.C, I had never seen. What a magnificent city. I kept on driving staying awake by drinking Benzedrine. I believe the photo of the miners made the cover of the stockholders report.

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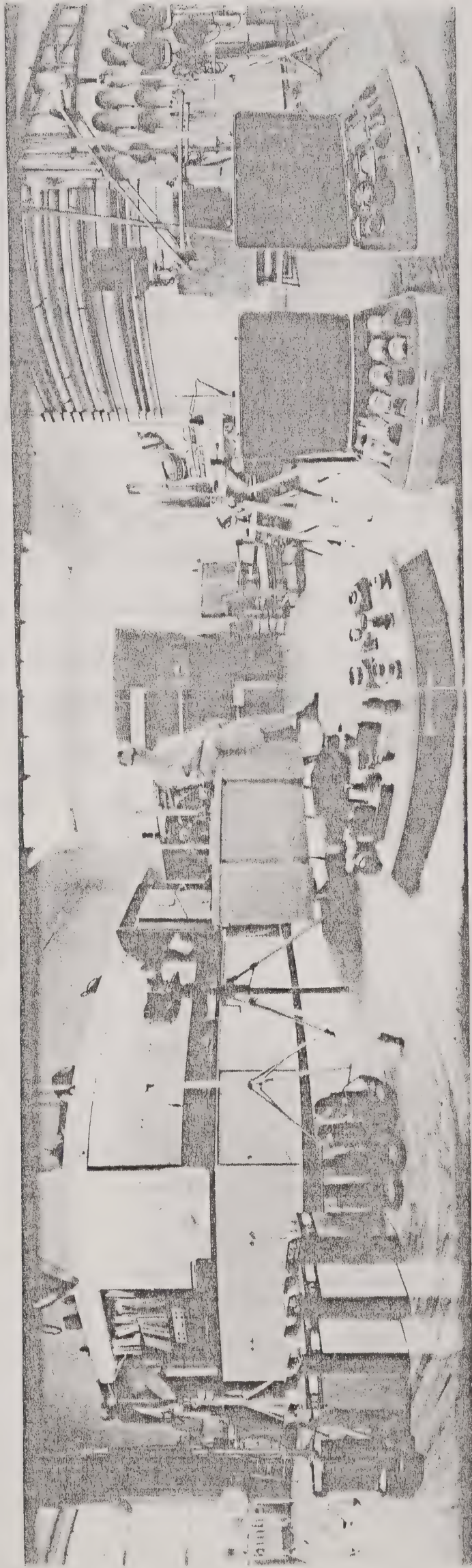
LOEBEL STUDIOS

340 East, 71 street was not a brownstone , but the size of one and standing on a standard Manhattan lot of 25 by 100 feet. It was modern with large windows and skylights and the front was covered with modern light glazed bricks. The landlord was George Sakier, a character, nice, but flaky. He was a painter and industrial designer. He also had a house in East-Hampton, small, but, a status-symbol. His building on east 71st street consisted of two studios, both with a large skylight.

Alice and I rented the front studio. Our living quarters were on the ground floor and the studio with the skylight on the second floor. We retained a good friend, Serge Sabarsky, as contractor. He was to become the foremost collector of Schiele and Klimt. It was a beautiful studio.(photo) The location was perfect. The shooting space 25x30 feet was on the small side, but OK The living quarters in spite of facing the street and being ground-level were different, we had a 12 foot ceiling, and more. It was a difficult space to find in Manhattan, and we were lucky to have it. We lived and worked there for 15 years.

Enrique Villiegas played jazz-piano. He had been a child –protégée playing classic music, but had fallen in love with jazz and switched to play jazz-piano only. He had come up from Buenos Aires to cut a record for Columbia. Alice's Argentine connections had given him our telephone number. He called and came to visit. We had just moved into our new east-side studio.

Enrique explained he had come up to play jazz-piano accompanied by Cozy Cole on drums and Milt Hinton on base. "Enrique would you play for us, I said, at our opening of the studio in three weeks?' I'd



WEBB STATION EAST 7th NEW YORK CITY

love to but only if you can get Cozy and Milt to accompany me. No big deal!?. Alice picked up the phone and called Cozy and Milt. They would be delighted to play with Enrique, but could we pick them up with a station-wagon. Their instruments were rather bulky, and could we afford to pay them \$50.00 each. We were poor, but not as poor.

Opening day came. We had invited almost a hundred guests. We had a buffet, but no hard liquor. We simply could not afford it, but we served beer and sodas. Willy, an old buddy from Auschwitz and a jazz aficionado, had come down from Boston, took the station wagon and picked up first Cozy and his drums, then Milt and his base. We had set up rented chairs and a podium for the musicians. I had listened to jazz a lot, but I never have heard three men make music as did our trio. It was a smashing success. I still listen to the Columbia record of Enrique, Cozy and Milt. It's been now nearly fifty years, and they still sound great today.

* * *

NO HOPE

When the door bell rang Geoffrey, my assistant, stepped to the window and looked down, onto Manhattan's East 71st street.

I was a commercial photographer, specializing in table-top work, photographing consumer products, mostly for advertising. This day I was set up for a diamond. My wife Alice and I opened the studio on the upper east-side on 71st street, a chic location in the 1990s, but in 1952 we were discouraged from opening there. It was too far up-town, we were told. Clients will not want to travel so far. Our studio was in the front of a small new two story building. Our living area was on the ground floor, upstairs was the studio. In the rear was another studio, rented at the time, to Miles Morgan, a man with a Movieola and a harpsichord. Our studio had a large sky-light with a shooting area 25x35 with an 12" ceiling. Smooth shiny oak covered the floor. The tripod was set up in the center of the room with the 8x10 Deardorf camera in place about five feet above the floor pointing straight down. I was on a small step ladder, a black focusing cloth over my head aligning the camera, when the man walked in. He was a security guard working for Harry Winston the Jeweler.

During the war Alice lived in Buenos Aires. She had been, working in Washington for Roosevelt's second vice-president Henry Wallace, and was sent to Buenos Aires to work for the Board of Economic Warfare at the American Embassy. When the war ended she remained in Argentina working as secretary to Alfredo Gorostica, an Argentine married, plus mistresses, fabulously rich, a VIP with a capital "V". In 1948 Alice returned to the States and lived in New York City where she continued working for Alfredo as secretary and translator. In 1954

Alfredo, came to New York. Usually he came to see his doctors, but this time he also wanted to buy jewelry. Count Albani, Harry Winston's salesman, sold him a brooch. Alice translated, they had lunch. Alice mentioned her photographer husband and Harry Winston became one of my clients. I had a good eye, a good sense of composition. At this point I also had 5 years of large format camera experience, though none photographing jewelry. I must have done something right because Harry Winston gave me steady work. His store was a building on East 51st across from St. Patrick's Cathedral. One day, standing in Mr. Winston's office on the second floor, I was reading a dedication to Harry Winston, hanging on the wall. It was from cardinal Spellman. "I want you to photograph my rare jewel collection" Mr. Winston said. I followed him to a safe and he showed me some of his collection. The large glittering pieces certainly were beautiful jewelry, but, their value was beyond my comprehension. Later, I used to joke, that working for Harry Winston, I did not know diamonds came smaller than 20 carats.

The man who rang the doorbell pulled a brown crumpled paper bag from his coat pocket and handed it to me. I carefully took out the diamond and placed it on a white working surface standing next to the camera. It was the Hope diamond, Madame Du Barry's and Marie Antoinette's favorite trinket, an awe inspiring stone, mostly because of its color, Oval cut, 45½ carats, mysterious gray-blue, set in an oval frame studded with 20 6 carat round blue-white diamonds and a small loop. The former owner, Mrs. McLean used to wear it on a black shoe-lace around her neck. The Hope did not bring her luck. She lost her three children, for that matter Marie Antoinette lost more – her head. I had velvet paper in many shades. Slipping the various colors under the stone I decided at first on a light blue. It highlighted the gray-blue Hope

with its white diamonds. But I changed my mind and chose white, I felt it showed the blue of the stone better. Geoffrey dry-mounted the velvet paper on a 16x20 board and taped it to the floor underneath the lens, a 10 inch Ektar. Looking through the camera I directed Jeff to position the diamond and the lights, a long and tedious process, trying to capture the highlights from the multifaceted stone. After lighting it I exposed an 8x10 Ektachrome, when the phone rang. A client wanted to talk to me. I got off the ladder and walked to my desk to pick up the phone. The security guard who had brought the stone was sitting at an other desk in the far corner. Jeff was in the darkroom reloading film. It was only a brief chat and then I returned to the camera, pulling the black cloths over my head to refocus but the Hope had disappeared!

Dado, my purple cross-eyed royal Siamese had sneaked into the studio and was playing with it. One paw stretched forward she gently poked at the diamond. Then she pushed it and Hope slid across the highly polished floor. I grabbed Dado a few feet from the camera set-up. "NO" , I said , she understood, but looked at me as if to say: "Please can't you buy it for me? NO!! there is not enough in petty cash, moreover, you know you are not permitted upstairs. Get out of here, I don't need cat hair on my velvet paper.

I photographed all of Winston's rare Jewels including "the Star of the East" a sparkling, blue-white I believe it was 135 carats! There was an uncut stone, over 250 carats. I remember an exceptionally striking set of earrings. It was classic, a seven carat round diamond, with a 13 carat pear shaped hanging from it. It was a matched pair of earrings, but, one blue-white, the other black diamonds. Another striking piece was a pair of Indian-Indian anklets Each adorned with about 15 to 20 one inch long pear shaped smooth (no facets) emeralds. I

photographed them using a leg model sitting in an arm chair, her long legs sprawled over the arm rest.

There was a tiara. One large blue-white stone about 45 carat surrounded by a sea of smaller blue-whites. In the 1950s when a million Dollar was still a million Dollar Winston's designers assembled necklaces which sold for a million and more, but I felt they were too heavy, too big, moreover, these necklaces were stiff. They did not flow naturally, for instance over the collar bone. I photographed in actual size and the transparency was mailed to prospective clients, I believe, at the time, most were sold in the middle east and Texas.

There was some special jewelry I photographed in the Winston's home. They had an apartment on upper Fifth Avenue facing the park. I set up my camera in the living room. Mrs. Winston would supervise and direct to be interrupted at times by her two sons, about 6, running through the room.

To touch the Hope is supposed to be bad luck. I did, but, I am not complaining, and Dado, my cat, lived to be twenty.

* * *

MOON ROCKET (photo)

Alice had been representing me since 1952 and I had become one of the top industrial photographers. In 1965 we planned a vacation and the day before we were to leave for Italy I got a call from Will Wright of Young & Rubicam advertising comp. Would I be available to go down to cape Canaveral to photograph the rocket-engines of the Apollo moon rocket? It's for Chrysler. Of course I would! Captivated by anything connected to space travel it was a dream come true to see, touch and smell these technological marvels facilitating a men's first step into space.

Alice and I left the next day for Rome. I left my itinerary with Y&R asking them to call my assistant if they needed me and I could be back immediately. I told Larry when I fly back we will meet at Idlewild airport and go on directly to cape Canaveral.

Alice and I stood in St. Peter's cathedral, but she knew I was somewhere else. Where are you right now? What are you thinking she asked. It was not the Pieta, not the treasures, or the architecture, it was the height of the Cathedral hall which attracted my attention. More than 400 feet high. Do you realize, Alice, the Apollo rocket would just fit in here. When we returned to the hotel I had a message to call the studio. Larry said We got the job, and I had to leave at once.

We had good friends in Rome. Michelangelo Durazzo a friend of Ernst Haas, and part time photo assistant when he lived in New York. Miles Morgan, who was my neighbor on east 71 street and Richard deCombray Miles' friend. I knew I did not leave Alice alone. I packed my bag and left for the airport. Larry joined me with the photo equipment at Idlewild. 24 hours later I stood on the top landing of



MOON ROCKET 1965

launch-pad 32 at Cape Canaveral looking down on the Apollo rocket. I was surprised at the casual security. I had passed security gates and never was asked a question. The cold war was raging. It was July 1965, twenty years after I had left, that is deserted from the Red Army, hoping to emigrate to the States.

I photographed the Apollo rocket without scaffolding, free standing, The job was for Chrysler who made the engines. This photo was to be mated to a photo I took in Detroit of a tank made also by Chrysler,

* * *

WRONG DESERT

N.W. Ayer agency wanted me to go to a desert and photograph fresh ripe red Tomatoes surrounded by desert and more desert. My knowledge of deserts was limited. We did not have many in Vienna, but Alice was born and raised in the desert, in Arizona, and knew all about deserts.

We flew to Phoenix, rented a car and Alice picked a desert north-east of Wickenburg and Congress Junction which was the village where Alice's mother bought groceries and posted the mail. She had to go shopping on horse back, or with a wagon. A magnificent (photo) of my mother-in-law on horse back survives. It hangs on a wall where we keep our family pictures in our home now. Cacti stood like petrified soldiers as far as the eye could see. It was lonesome, wild, and beautiful, but on the day we photographed it was not serene or

tranquil. The Blue Angels, an U.S. Airforce team of screaming stunt jets used the sky above as a training area. We brought perfect Tomatoes from New York and used a sun-lamp, we had brought along, to ripen them over night in our Arizona motel. We selected a spot, set up my Hasselblad, and while looking through the camera I directed Alice placing the Tomatoes. She squirted water over them. squirt, squirt, Click, click, and we flew home first class. but Alice walked back to economy, she wanted to stretch out across three empty seats.

I delivered the photos. Herb, they are beautiful, but it's the wrong desert. We want sand, lots of sand. OK, no problem. The next morning Alice and I took American Airlines to Huma, Arizona. A few miles outside Yuma are the sand dunes, They are used by Hollywood if the Sahara was not in the budget. Again I ripened perfect Tomatoes



THE "RIGHT" DESERT

40224

over night with a sunlamp. We were not supposed to go into the dunes without guide, but we did, and picked a spot. Alice used a broom we brought along to "retouch" the sand around the Tomatoes. This time there was no problem. It was the right desert (photo). The photos were for a chemical company which manufactured a spray which was supposed to penetrate the ground a few feet forming a barrier to retain water and make the desert bloom. I am sure it did not work, and I never heard of it again. What does however work is "pivotal irrigation" which I photographed and filmed from a helicopter for Eaton corporation I believe in 1979. It's being used in Libya and many other places, and can be clearly seen from the airplane. Perfect green circles, about 2000 feet in diameter, one next to the other. however, it is so effective that it lowers the underground water level dangerously. So what's the solution? Use less water?

* * *

RACISM

For Ebony magazine, one of my clients, I mostly photographed fashion. I had a large sky-light and was able to do available light photography. It gave fashion photos a special look, an expensive one. Segregation, at the time, was still so tacit that white clients booked after Ebony, running into my black clients, would raise their eyebrows. They never complained, but it did not enhance my reputation, nor my standing with them.

Mr. John H. Johnson, the publisher of Ebony magazine, wanted me to photograph fashion in Bermuda. Why did he not hire a black photographer? In 1950 there was no black photographer around to do the job.

We flew on Eagle Airline -- six fashion models, Ebony's art director, an attractive woman with smooth dark-olive skin, dark eyes, and jet black shining hair, and myself. It was a difficult assignment. In fashion photography models should move gracefully and inspire the photographer. I would call out "Yes, that's it, hold it, turn your head a bit." However, these young women, having grown up as second-class citizens were terribly insecure. They held themselves in low esteem. Their movements were awkward and I found myself posing them like clay figurines to simulate a "fashion-look". Moreover, we were not even permitted to walk on main street. There were only two hotels open to Negroes.

The models' main topic was the color, of their skin. It was dismal. Upon my return I asked Johnson why he sent us to segregated Bermuda. There are hotels and shops there which give us advertising. We have to do it.

Another assignment for Ebony was anything but dismal. It was 1957. I met Lena Horn on Broadway and 62nd street at Brooks, a theatrical dress-rental place to photograph her for the cover of a magazine. We picked a white, in part, form fitting dress with a flowing skirt. I set up my Rolleiflex and a set of strobe-lights -- my very first strobes! They were quite unknown in the early fifties. The flash-duration, was so short it froze any movement. And it sure did. Lena, had such beautiful movements. Lena, I said, please give me a spin, a pirouette, let the skirt flow. I flashed away and commanded: faster, faster. It was a beautiful picture (see photo) a combination of beauty, movement and a flowing white skirt.

I remember Dianne Carroll, very young, tall and skinny, She worked as a fashion model nevertheless her photos looked well. Eartha Kid posed for a cover. Sparsely dressed showing her beautiful skin, she moved like a tigress, posing for me stretched out in an hammock I had set up in the studio.

It was customary to take clients out for lunch. Elsie Archer was a woman with exquisite taste exquisitely dressed, beautiful hands and skin. I had worked with her, Ebony's fashion director, for some time. I asked Alice for help. Please try and get reservations for us at a restaurant which will not throw us out. Why should they ? Elsie is black. Alice found a place, Sardi's. We had a pleasant lunch.

In the early sixties. Our business started to flourish. Alice's representation and my photography succeeded. I became known for my craftsmanship. My specialties were Industrial photography, scientific, and aerial photography, extreme close-ups, and I became known for my efficient and beautiful studio in a good location. (photo) I photographed for General Electric, General Motors, Fortune Magazine,



LENA HORNE 1955

Chrysler, and many other large companies. My daily rate went up and my availability went down.

* * *

CLEAVAGE

We shared the house on 71st street, with Miles Morgan, J.P.'s grandson. He told me he was raised by his grandfather's bodyguards. Miles represented Janus Films. He brought Ingmar Bergman movies to the States. He introduced me to his "Moviola" a device to review films. Later when I became a film producer and director, my Moviola became the instrument where I discovered the morning after a sleepless night if my dailies were good or bad. Some times, of course, a re-shoot was not possible. Well then, there was always suicide!?

Miles ask me to photograph the actress Shirley Johns for a cover. We went up on the roof of our house for a daylight shot. She was young and attractive. This was the time for huge rear-fins on cars and jutting boobs. It was a time when Ingrid Bergman was banned from the screen because she gave birth to a child out of wedlock. Now the pendulum, has swung the other way which makes perjury just a little white lie --- if it's about sex, and oral sex the talk of the town. On the roof, we did not have much to work with, but Shirley and I succeeded in creating a "sexy" cleavage. It was published on the cover of a newspaper insert.

* * *

A SAAB STORY

Fall 1972: The phone rang, an advertising agency producer ask me to produce a 20 minute low-budget publicity movie for Saab cars. To be shot in Sweden at the Saab factories , and, he said, let me see a script, and an estimate, and please keep it low. I replaced the phone. Normally, the advertising agency would supply a script, but I wouldn't mind going to Sweden. It would be a nice change from the table-top jobs which had kept me busy lately. I also wanted to see Sweden the crown jewel of the brotherhood of socialist nations. I called Nick, with whom I had worked before, and gave him the Saab problem. Nick was a copy-writer at BBDO, talented and creative. He said, I would like to go to Sweden too. I'll call you back. He did. What do you think of an Olympic contest, a "Decathlon". Put the car through ten competitions. Slalom, hurdles, a 100 meter dash, a broad jump, a hundred meter crawl, and more. The longer I thought about the visuals the better I liked Nick's idea. We made story-boards, Alice and I estimated the cost. We submitted it to the client, and --- we got the job.

Before the "Saab Story" came up, I had been working on an other estimate for a TV commercial. It was for MG cars, an exciting concept. The commercial opened with a close-up of the MG's emblem above the grill. The car rolls back, camera zooms back, revealing the car in the cargo hold of a C-130 with its gaping opening in the rear. The car falls out and a parachute deploys. Now cut to a close-up of boy - girl tightening their helmets and jumping after the floating MG. All three land in the desert, the couple jumps into the car, and drive off into the

sunset, to live happily for ever after. It too was a low budget job. I got in touch with my sky-diver buddies from my early jumping days. They used to drop tanks and trucks for the Marines. I found out the car would have to rest on a platform on which it would slide out, then float down. If the car would just roll back out the rear door on its wheels it would get hung up on the door sill the moment the rear wheels leave the cargo plane's floor.

It was a budget-job, nevertheless I had to plan a minimum of three car-drops, because many things could go wrong.

The airplane rental was the highest number in my estimate, but I discovered that I might be able to make a deal with the Irish air force which would bring down the price. Included in my estimate were three cameras and operators. One camera on the ground, one in a helicopter filming the event air to air, and one inside the cargo-plane's hold. I was bidding against two west-coast producers.

Back to Saab. Since it was a budget job a fancy crew, ("many bodies") was out of question. Alice made the travel arrangements. I hired only one man as assistant. The union had recommended him to me. My 16mm Arriflex, lenses, magazines, film, tripods, and more fitted into 6 aluminum cases. Alice stayed home to take care of our business, clients, the studio, and more. I, plus seven cases including my personal case flew British Airways to London, where I met at the airport an executive of England's largest film equipment rental company Samuels LTD. to discuss rental prices and the Irish air force deal for the GM TV commercial. Two hours later my plane left for Stockholm where

I was to meet with Nick and the assistant.

There was, however, a problem. For about a week a bank hold-up in the center of Stockholm had been in progress. All Swedish TV channels covered this event 24 hours a day. The taxi I hired on the airport stopped, the driver turned around and said that's as close as I can get to your hotel. The driver explained, the Sheraton is near the bank which is being held up and the whole area is cordoned off by police. I had to shuttle my seven cases to the hotel. I couldn't even get a porter to help me. Everyone was glued to the television covering the hold-up. . I was exhausted. In addition I had missed a nights sleep. The next morning I met Nick and Sid the assistant. whom I had never met before. He was a big fellow. I was looking forward to him, instead of me, carrying the equipment.

We rented a VW bus, loaded the equipment and drove to Sodertalje, a city with a population of less than 60,000, where one of the Saab factories is located. Arriving late, late for Sodertalie, it was only 8pm, we checked into a hotel. All restaurants were already closed. Still on NY time, my colleagues went to bed, but I found a supermarket open, bought some food and decided to watch a movie while munching the food. I was hungry. I had a choice of two movie houses, both showing pornographic films only. I bought a ticket, but soon lost my appetite, and returned to the hotel.

This hotel was the place where teen-agers, young Swedes of Sodertelje met to dance at the so called "Five o' clock Tea". By law it closed at 10pm where upon the youth congregated in front of the hotel along the side-walks. However, most were high on drugs. Some literally rolling in the gutter, shouting, singing, and laughing, and what

ever else one does when high on drugs. I asked for another room facing the back, not the noisy front. No luck, they were all watching the hold-up, and could not be bothered. I had to keep my room and finally fell asleep at midnight after the last of the youngsters had left.

The next morning we checked into the factory. I've seen many, but this place was beautiful, modern, clean, streamlined, photogenic, well lit. Saab engines were manufactured there. Filming it was a piece of cake. My assistant was good, but strange. Something seemed wrong with the man, and was. He assisted me one more day and then disappeared. Just disappeared for good. I heard he had a hang-up: Whore-houses, and there are a "few" in Sweden. Some time after my return to the States I heard Sid had committed suicide. What a tormented young man he must have been.

We got a brand-new bright red 4 door 1972 sporty looking Saab sedan, and a driver. He was one of the foremost Swedish rally drivers. For the "Slalom" Nick, and I, drove to a ski-resort. There was no snow, just chair-lifts and green steep slopes. I placed luminescent red cones in a line down a long slope. I attached one camera with a "super-grip" to the roof of the Saab. A super-grip is a large suction-cap. I used my second camera hand-held sitting next to the rally driver. Both cameras equipped with wide-angle lenses did not need to be focused, just aimed. Both cameras rolling we went down the slope in consecutive "S" turns following and avoiding the cones. It was a wild ride, and one without seat-belts. There were none 1972. It was difficult to hold on for life while holding a camera, but I had done shoots like this before. I knew it was good footage, or as we say, "I had it in the can." My spirits lifted. For the broad-jump our driver took us to a secluded country road. It was

straight, but had a hump. Ralph, our driver accelerated to 80 miles per hour and after passing the hump sailed nearly 50 feet through the air. I set up my camera low with a longer lens, to accentuate the car's height above ground. I slowed the event down by shooting 100 instead of 24 frames per second. I activated the camera by remote control. Again I knew I had it in the can, but, a rock, propelled by the impacting car hit the lens of the Arri and "terminated", or I should say exterminated it. I just was glad I was not looking through the camera when it happened. The company photographer assisted me. He was very helpful. I invited him and his wife for dinner and asked him to recommend a good restaurant. He warned, it's expensive. The photographer, his wife, Nick, and myself had a delightful dinner and exquisite Swedish food. The photographer confessed, he always wanted to take his wife to this restaurant but could not afford it. Could not afford it ? Surely, as company photographer, you have a good salary. Yes I have, he said, but more than half is taken for taxes, Socialism is expensive.

Our next stop was Trollhattan, where Saab assembles cars. Nick went ahead to prepare the shoot and I, again without an assistant, and seven cases took the express train, a three hour ride. The express was to arrive shortly in Sodertalje for a scheduled one minute stop. There was no porter. I was standing next to the track, my seven cases lined up hoping a car door will come to rest in "walking distance". It was raining. The train, modern and fast, whizzed in to the station. Just after I had loaded the last case it started rolling again. I carried the seven cases from the entrance inside the car. It was empty, and I slumped down exhausted for a change. A man stopped in front of me and declared you are sitting in my seat. First I thought he was joking. He wasn't. Passengers have to sit in the seats assigned to them by their ticket. I

pulled out my ticket and found that my seat was in an other car three cars ahead of the one I was in. I had to move.

Nick picked me up at the station . Nick's back was out of order and he could not help me. I loaded the seven cases in the rental car, again a VW bus. We drove to Trollhatan, a city of 40,000. We parked the car to check into the Stadt hotel. I asked the man at the front-desk if I could leave my equipment in the locked car over night. He must have thought I was from Mars. You can't even leave it in the car right now he said, I took my seven cases up to the room. I had learned, and rented a room looking out the back. Like the hotel in Sodertelje, the Stadt Hotel also had a "Five O' Clock Tea". This time, however, I could not hear the "frolicking" Swedish youth rolling on the side-walk.

The car assembly was again stream-lined, modern, and photogenic. I was also filming an arrangement in which 6 Saabs performed a driving maneuver. I did it on a nearby airport grass-strip.. The sun was just setting. We call it in the business the "Magic hour". The extreme side-light makes for a good visual effect. But sun-sets do not last long. A common warning to the director or camera-man is the shout: "The sun's on final -- pilot's lingo. In Sweden, however, the "Magic Hour" lasts and lasts because of its far north location. What a delight. In contrast on the equator the sun just falls into the horizon, whoosh, it's gone.

In Stockholm, the night before our return to the States, Nick and I did some sightseeing. The main square was filled with five-hundred to a thousand. hippies. I do not know what the occasion was, but I saw, what looked like a mirage. The "SS" kept the young Swedes in check. Of course it was not the SS, but they looked just like them. It was Swedish Polise, (That's how they spell it) dressed in military uniform, boots, riding

pants, black belt with black shoulder strap, and regulation cap with black visor, plus German shepherds on short leash. It took me by surprise. But what really floored me, particularly as an American, was the way the police manhandled the youngsters. Rough is too gentle a word. If NY city police had treated a young man or woman the way the Swedish police did, it would have made headlines. The NY Daily News would scream: "Police Brutality" The next morning we left the Socialist heaven, who, were sitting in judgment of the United States and its war in Vietnam.

Back, in New York I found out that my bid for the MG commercial was too high. A west-coast company got it, however, they had based their estimate on only two car drops. I heard it was a difficult shoot. On the first drop the chute didn't open. The MG car crashed into the desert. Falling 3,000 feet the MG, I was told, was flat as a Matzo. In addition everybody had food-poisoning, except the producer. He was so tense he could not eat. The helicopter for the air-to air shots would not start in the morning, and the main cargo chute was damaged in the drop. It was repaired. The next day the second, and last drop succeeded. But, I was still sorry I did not get the Job.

* * *

PART THREE

HERBERT LOEBEL

2F PROFESSIONAL BUILDING
VILLAGE STREET
SOUTHBURY CT. 06488

Chameleons they turned as black as the stove top.

I phoned Ernst in Greece. We will have to turn on the heat in your studio for Pedro and Jose, that's \$65.00 a month, or, we could give them to the Bronx zoo? Please take them to the zoo he said.

We heated a brick, and put it in a big box with the Iguanas, and drove to the zoo. They are beautiful, what did you feed them asked the Iguana-keeper? Raspberries and Lettuce. Yes, but what else? Nothing else. But they need meat. We did not know that. After a few weeks Alice and I went back to the zoo to visit Pedro and Jose. They were kept in a cage with hundreds of Iguanas, but being both tall dark and handsome specimen we had no problem spotting them.

Ernst was to get married. Alice arranged the ceremony. It took place at the "Bird & Bottle", a well-known restaurant, in Garrison New York. The bride's brother, and Alice and I were the only guests. We were also the witnesses.

Herby, I have to go on assignment to the Galapagos, would you mind taking care of Norma --- she is going to have my baby.

Norma soon checked into a hospital where she gave birth to a daughter. I was there, Ernst was not. He had been hired by de Laurentis on the basis of his 35mm slide-abstractions of nature, to film the "creation" of the world.

Ernst was not ready for the medium of film. It turned out to be a disaster. I believe the format was Todd-A-O, 70mm. Big heavy cameras. When they got to the Galapagos the Turtles had climbed up a mountain. Ernst and his crew left one of the two heavy cameras on the beach and climbed up to the top with only one. When they got back the tide had taken the camera they had left, out into the ocean. \$100,000 down the drain. Moreover, at the time, they were the only two Todd-A-

O cameras in existence. De Laurentis, after viewing the dailies in Rome, grumbled: "I could have filmed this in the Rome zoo".

Ernst ask me, would you lend me your studio, I have to photograph Carl Reiner and Natalie Wood. I had elaborate lighting equipment, Ernst didn't. Of course, I said. It was funny. Reiner "tossed" salad. It flew all over the place, some got stuck on the ceiling, and Ernst clicked away. Natalie Wood said; Mr. Loebel I am expecting the delivery of a Rolls Royce. When it came I put it in the garage across the street. No, she did not forget it there when she left, but I would not have been surprised.

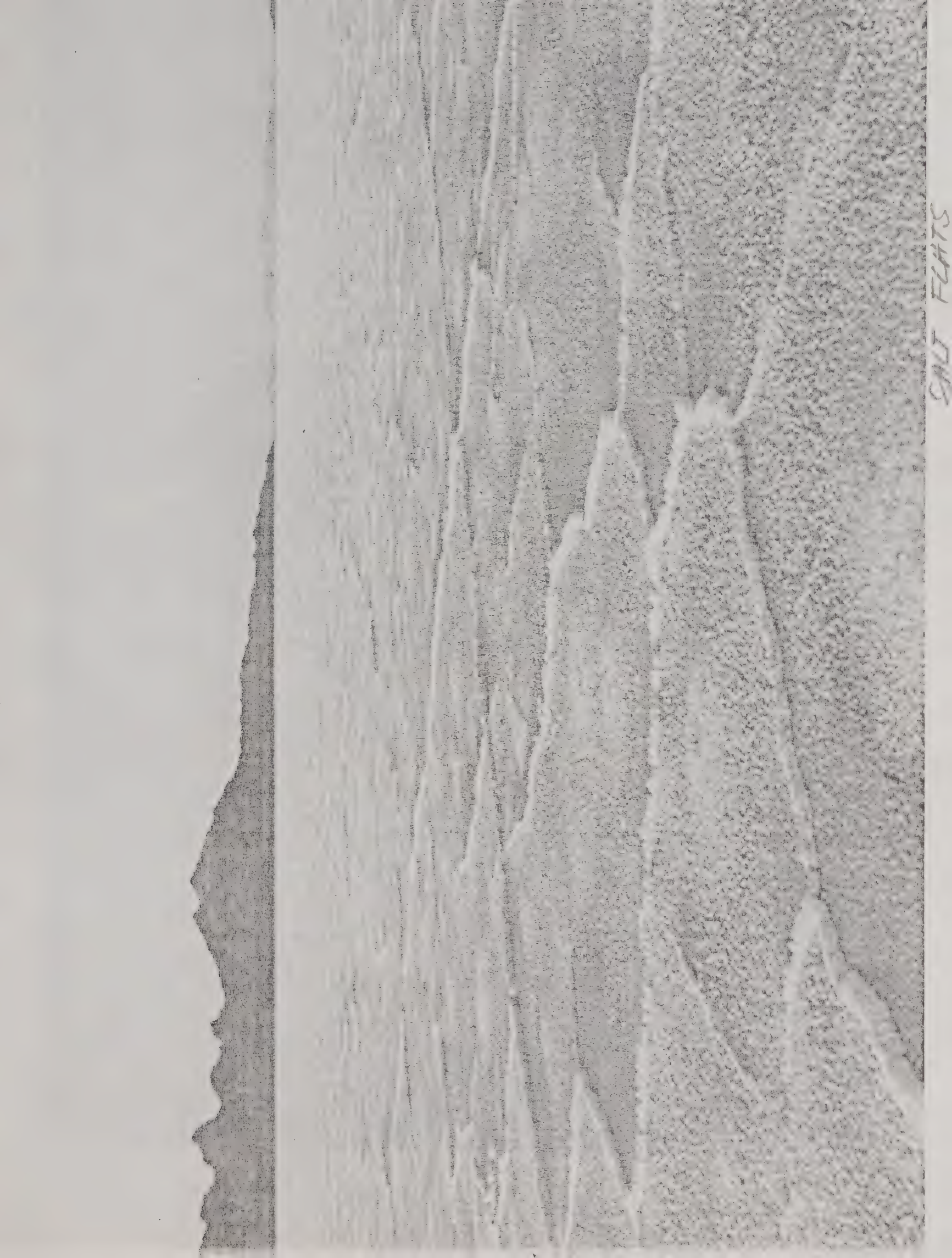
Ernst was the photographer on the set of the "Misfits" which was filmed on the West Coast. He returned with a thousand slides and spread them out, as he always did, on large sheets of frosted plexy-glass lit from below. Herb, please help me selecting? It was a depressing experience. Montgomery Clift is not the uplifting type, but the faces of Marilyn Monroe and Clark Gable were drawn, tired, wrinkled from age, sand, and the sun. It was their last film. Both died soon there-after. Ernst was a dear friend. He died young, suddenly. He left a wife and two children. I photographed his son. He was five years old. Before lifting him on a white paper background I cleaned the soles of his little shoes with a damp towel when he made a remark I never forgot: "Mister, please, don't hurt me."

* * *

SALT FLATS

Eerie, secluded, white, vast, the Utah salt flats are a sight to behold. I was commissioned by BBDO to photograph the American car racer Craig Breedlove (photo) braking the land-speed record racing his "Spirit of America". It was a beautiful machine, a streamlined jet engine with a vertical stabilizer, on wheels. I had been to the flats before photographing Mickey Thompson racing his Challenger-I. That was a contraption with four Pontiac engines, one for each wheel.

This time, 1965, I had flown with the art-director of BBDO to Salt Lake City. We rented a car and drove to Wendover Utah, about 75 miles farther west, not far from the race track. Everything is strange out there. Wendover is a village half in Utah, and half in Nevada. Half wet (alcohol) and half dry. Half Mormon, half gambling joints and whore-houses. We checked into a Motel on the Utah side which was closer to the track. Film crews, mostly from the west-coast, had already checked in. The climate was very dry and hot. The next morning we drove to the race-track. It is a white, perfectly flat sea of salt. A 12 inch wide black straight line, as far as the eye could see, painted right on the dried salt defined the track. In the distance purple low mountains, above it all a dark blue cloudless sky. Tents were set up for Breedlove's crew. They were filled with machines, lathes, welding equipment, drill-presses and other support equipment for emergency repairs. There was also a crazy Hungarian. He had converted a large jet engine by attaching 4 wheels and a little bulge on one side for a seat to his "Spirit of Hungary" Before the run his crew fitted him, it seemed to me, with a shoe-horn into the little bulge. I expected my assistant Adelaide de Menil to fly in shortly. We had met parachute jumping and she asked me to let her assist on





SALT FLATS: BREEDLOVE

1973

this job. She flew in from New York and chartered a small plane in Salt Lake City to fly directly to the flats, itself an enormous landing field. A Beach Bonanza landed just a few hundred yards away with Addie jumping out ready to schlepp my heavy equipment and learn photography. All she carried was a small over the shoulder bag. The art-director, Addie and I walked over to the coffee tent to have a small breakfast. Then we started to set up my electric Nikons and the Hasselblads along the track, about 75 feet off the black line along the track. Film crews had set up scaffolding to place their cameras 10 to 15 foot above ground.

How does one capture the mood, the landscape, the speed, the machines, the driver, in a still-photo ? From close, from far, low, high, or panning the camera with the speeding car ?

I had met Craig the night before at the motel. He was an extremely good looking young man,. I remember discussing parachute jumping. He said to me he would never, in a million years, jump out of an airplane. Now, he walked down the track looking with concern at my Nikons. They are too close he said. Hitting a Nikon at 400 miles an hour would not be good for me, the tire, nor your Nikon. I moved the remote controlled cameras back another 20 feet from the center line. I held the electric release switches for the cameras in my hands. One camera was facing up the track. The other perpendicular. Both cameras were set at 2 frames per second at a thousands of a second exposure per frame. The jet car roaring by, was the short and noisy climax. However, I photographed the "Spirit of America" also standing still in front of my Hasselblad mounted on a fluid-action tripod, the camera set for a third of a second a relative long exposure. By panning the camera past the standing car at different speeds while exposing,

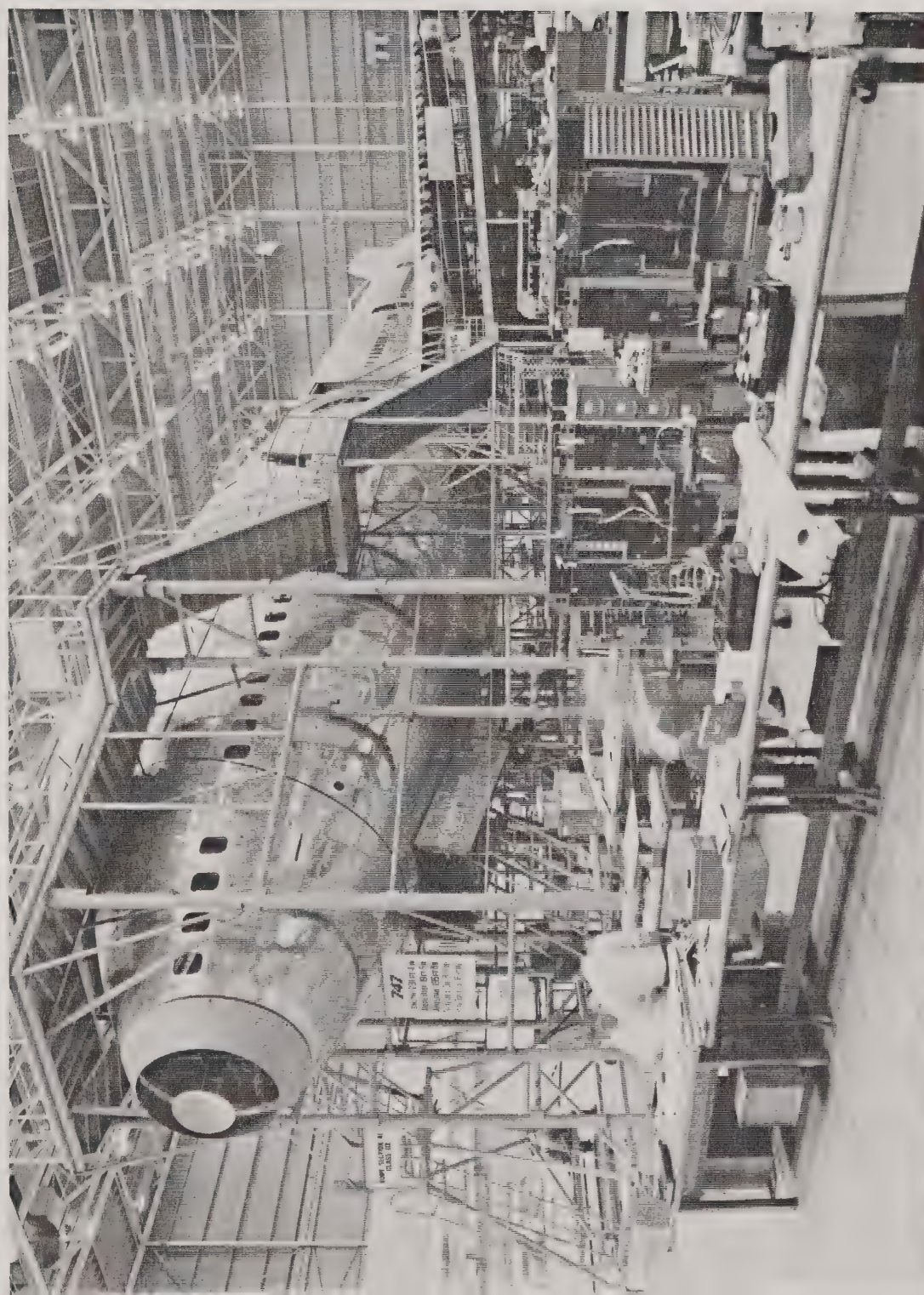
the resulting blurred image gives the illusion of speed. (photo) I do not recall which photo the Agency finally used.

* * *

BOEING 747

It was the first Boeing 747. For the Michael Carter Agency I went to Everett Washington where the 747 was being assembled. The Hall was so large it seemed to me, that a Cessna 150 could take off and land inside. The mock-up stood surrounded by scaffolding in the center. The vertical rudder was not attached. Decals of AA, BOAC, JPL, UNITED and other airlines were painted on the side. Walking and climbing all over the mock-up I photographed, mostly with my 90° wide-angle Hasselblad. I like wide-angle lenses. They involve the viewer more than do long lenses who remain far from the subject. The various assembly areas had distinctive colors. Bright blue, bright red, bright yellow. I also used a cherry-picker as a photo platform. They normally serve to replace the mercury-vapor bulbs in the ceiling fixtures 75 feet above ground. The size of this plane appeared to be, then, gigantic. After photographing the 747 from another airplane and wearing a parachute, back on the ground I resolved to learn parachute-jumping just in case I should find myself suddenly in mid-air. I had survived Auschwitz, and it would have been just plain silly to kill myself photographing a Boeing.

* * *



THE FIRST ROING 747

SKY DIVING

Wolf and I had lunch. Wolfgang was an art-director at Calkins & Holden. He emigrated to the States after surviving WW-II in Berlin and serving in the Hitler-youth, the Nazi youth organization. We had done a few jobs together. This weekend I am going jumping, he said, would you like to join me ? I did not know what he meant. He explained and it slowly dawned on me he wanted me to join him falling out of airplanes high up in the sky. Remembering Everett Washington I agreed reluctantly, hoping the Weather will not cooperate, and I wouldn't have to jump. When I told Alice, always a good sport, she did not discourage me.

The next weekend Wolf, Alice, and I (photo) drove to Orange, Massachusetts where Jacque Istel, a crazy, but nicely crazy Frenchman and a friend of Wolf ran a parachute center to introduce Americans to the sport of "Sky-diving". Orange was the first parachute center in the States, in 1960, long before this sport became popular. In the army it took three weeks training to be ready for the first jump. In Orange it took 3 hours! We were 15 first time jumpers. Peter de Roos, who worked for Morgan Guarantee Trust and was to become the director of the Arabian-American bank in London, was my jump mate. We were fitted into army green-gray jump-suits, helmets, goggles and jump-boots with extra thick rubber soles, which hopefully would cushion the impact with mother earth. Then came the parachute. It was fitted on my back, bulky and heavy. In front on my chest hung the spare, a chute I was to deploy if the main chute did not open. It was hot, bewildering, and sandy. We had used sand-boxes for our training. The landing area was a circle, about 100 feet in diameter, filled with sand.



1961

WOLFGANG AND ALICE



WOLFGANG LIESCHKE AND ALICE 1960

Wolfgang who had already hundreds of jumps was of course not in our group, but waiting on the ground to congratulate me on “arrival”. In the center of the circle stood a man with a big loudspeaker mounted on top of a tripod addressing the jumpers way up in the sky by name to tell them what to do to land on target. Left and right from the open chute above dangled two handles which had to be pulled to steer the chute into the center of the circle. We sat on two benches facing each other inside the plane, a Canadian Northman, a one engine rather big high-wing airplane. We were all first-time jumpers. The plane’s door was removed making a large gaping hole in the side. It was through this hole I was to jump out when told by the Jump master Nate Pond, a soft spoken gentle man with thousands of Jumps to his credit. It was noisy, hot, and alarming to think of leaveing the plane through this gaping hole at 2,000 feet above ground. Peter, next to me was quiet, as were the others. It was too noisy to communicate. . At the proper altitude the jumper stepped up to sit in the entrance his feet resting on a step outside the plane. When Nate banged on the jumper’s helmet he was to jump out facing in the direction of flight and take a spread eagle position. When executed correctly it provided stability preventing the jumper from spinning. A chute about to be opened does not like a spinning jumper. It can get all confused, tangled up. We do not want this. Most of all we had been told over and over to count “One-thousand, two-thousand, to five-thousand. If by then we did not feel the strong pull upward from the inflating main shoot, we were to deploy the spare, and, most important, we had to help deployment of the spare by pushing it out, away so that it would not entangle itself in the non or half deployed main chute trailing above. I took my pulse. I was pumping Adrenalin, 140 heart beats per minute. When my turn came I did more or less as I

was told. I had problems keeping my big feet on the step outside because of the rushing air, the slip-stream. Then I noticed the plane slowing down to accommodate my jump. Nate banged on my helmet and I found myself “suddenly in mid-air”, just as the pilot in Everett had prognosticated . However, I did not need to pull on my shiny handle vigorously because the chute, was pulled out by the static line, as it is called. Now everything happened fast, so fast that I do not recall having counted “one-thousand, two... It was pretty violent, and bewildering. I was yanked upward by the main chute, but had never been told about the steering handles which now dangled on the left and right. In contrast to the plane I had just left through the gaping hole now it was wonderfully quiet, almost serene. The landscape below painted in beautiful colors characteristic for the Connecticut fall. But, I drifted and drifted, from below I heard repeatedly my name. What the hell did they want? They wanted me to pull one of the steering handles which I never did. When I landed I was 300 feet off target, not in the sandy soft circle, but I landed on one of the three hard surface runways. And I found out the hard way why they were called hard surface runways. They are damn hard!! I promised myself to never ever land on one again --- without an airplane!!.

Wolf came to shake hands, I embraced Alice, there was a sense of accomplishment and exhilaration. Mother earth treated my 5 feet 7 inches relatively kindly on impact. However, Peter's 6 foot and 2 inches helped sprain his ankle and Alice drove him to the hospital.

During the next months I accumulated 15 more jumps. On the sixth I added an improvement which today, I believe, is standard equipment. I added a two-way communication between the jumper and the teacher on the ground. I gave Mike, the man on the ground, a walky-talky and

slipped my set under the straps of my spare chute attached to my chest in front of me. Upon jumping all I had to do was pull out the antenna. I told Mike if I can hear him I would move my legs. When I was floating down under my deployed chute and could hear Mike's voice loud and clear, I signaled him with my legs where-upon he burst out into a long speech cursing that he should have had this years ago it would have saved him a lot of shouting. He never told me how to steer the chute. The last two jumps, number 14 and 15, I delayed opening the chute for 30 seconds, a 30 second free-fall, which was another very special experience. It felt like being on top of the world.

* * *

TWO OSCARS

The Gundersons were friends of my wife. I met their daughter Karen in 1950. She was an attractive teenager, photogenic, and I photographed her. She became a good friend and when she married Alan Jay Lerner Alice and I gave them a party. Alan got me into film. He was a charming talented but a driven man. Sometimes, if he did not wear his cotton gloves, he bit his fingernails, and I believe he wrote his best lyrics in the middle of the night at a stand-up desk.

The Lerner's (**photo**) invited us for dinner. Alice and I, were picked up by hydro-plane on the east river near 71st street, and flown to Center Island where the Lerner's had a "little" house. I had brought along a gift for Alan, a "sculpture" I made. An exhibition of American artists at the Whitney museum inspired me to create it.

Alice and I had opened a film-stage, in 1970. It was adjacent to the Whitney museum on East 74 street. Some of the exhibitions at the Whitney were awful. For instance 20 to 30 old large truck-tires were piled up left and right of the entrance. This piece of "art" overflowed into Madison avenue. I called the local police precinct to complain that the Whitney was littering the neighborhood. However, the piece of art which directly inspired me to create the "sculpture" I brought for Alan did not creep out on to Madison. It was a white china plate, on it lay a piece of, what can best be described as, hardened vomit. It was marked "untitled".

Alice and I had a house in Sherman Ct. 75 miles north of New York. One of my neighbors Marty Muller was a dairy farmer. He had a hundred cows. I found what I was looking for in one of his meadows. It had to be the right size and nicely shaped. I found a few and put them



ALAN + Kfir LERNER AT MY STUDIO

carefully in a container. At home, I placed the turds on top of the hot-water heater to harden and dry. The next day I selected one and had it cast in Bronze. "What kind of finish do you want ? The salesman asked: He showed me examples. Pointing to a small bust I said: "that's it". Oh, yes, that's Arthur Miller. It had the finish I wanted. A week later I had two identical sculptures and mounted them on white marble. This piece of art did not remain untitled, I named it "Bullshit". Alice gift-wrapped it and when we arrived at City Island I gave the package to Alan. He unwrapped it, contemplated it, and walked silently to a table where his two Oscars stood. He pushed them apart and placed my "sculpture" in-between saying: "Herbert, I deserve it, because I wrote more bullshit in my life than anybody else". Alan, please, do not misinterpret my "sculpture" It's just supposed to be different, a conversation piece.

This visit was an extraordinary experience. We were the only guests and Alice and I particularly loved Allen accompanying himself on his Yamaha piano singing and reciting lyrics after dinner.

One Sunday morning Alan phoned. Herbert, my doctor Sam Jacobson made an invention. It concerns color photography. I would like your opinion. Can you meet me on 81st street off Madison in front of his office? Allen lived on 74 off Fifth, I lived on 74 off Madison, and the doctor's was nearby on 82nd. We met and walked into Sam's office a not very large room on the ground floor. He was known to be a doctor to the rich and famous. He claimed Marlene Dietrich, JFK, and many other VIP's as patients. He was a charlatan, a doctor "feel-good". He fed (and hooked) his patients injecting them with amphetamines. Of course this lifted their spirits and made them feel good.

Allen, a hopeless romantic, thought Sam was the greatest. I had

never met nor even heard of Sam before. He sat behind his desk. On the walls were narrow shelves with hundreds of vials filled with colored liquids. Allen ask him to show me his "Invention". Sam rang for his nurse. She pulled the blinds and turned off all lights except his desk lamp. Sam unfolded a cover of Life Magazine and flattened it on his desk-top. Then he lowered the desk-light over the page. It was the only lit item in the room, otherwise it was dark. Sam pulled out a piece of plastic. It looked like an old comb, and started to move it rhythmically back and forth over the Life magazine page, holding it about a quarter of an inch away. After a while he started to mutter: "Can you see how the colors change? How they improve? How they gain intensity?" After a while the lights came on. The blinds were pulled up and Sam handed me the color page. They all looked at me, the expert. I stood incredulous, and embarrassed. I would be unable to give judgment, I said, however, if you would get two identical color photos and treat one and not the other, I could judge. The doctor did not like my suggestion. He was called away for an emergency. Allen and I just stood, and I shook my head in disbelief. When Sam returned Alan asked him to demonstrate to me the experiment set up in the rear laboratory.

Mr. Loebel does not like my experiments?! Come on, please show him what you showed me yesterday. Well, it was a fraud, just like the one I just witnessed. It was more theatrical though, with some "special effects" added, nevertheless a silly fraud. Somewhere the good doctor had found a large electro-magnet. The iron core stood about 40 inch high and was 20 inch diameter. Around the core a wire spool. The thing must

have weighed a ton. Sam placed a color photo on it. He then took an industrial thermos bottle, removed the top and poured some of its content over the photo. At room temperature the liquid nitrogen boiled off violently, noisily, but harmlessly. Sam failed to impress me because I had used liquid nitrogen in film special effects often. The nurse walked in and Sam screamed at the top of his voice: "Stop, don't come in, you are disturbing my magnetic field". Well, enough of this charade. And JFK was one of his patients?! I showed Allen an experimental film. I shot it through the microscope. "Crystals growing" lit in black-field polarized light. The shapes, movements, and colors were remarkable. I combined it with Varese's electronic music and the result was effective, almost moving. Allen, the hopeless romantic, fell in love with it and insisted I join him in Hollywood where he just started to work on "Paint your Wagon". However, in spite of my 16mm little Crystal movie I was just a still photographer, far from being a film-maker. But I was young and ambitious so I left my wife, my work, my studio, for Hollywood checking into the Beverly Hills Hotel. The next morning I met Alan in Josh Logan's offices on the Paramount lot. Josh, a well-known director, appeared subdued. He just had "survived" the opening of, I believe it was "Brigadoon," and it seemed to have not done well, or as they gently say in Hollywood: "It bombed". I was far from being able to contribute, but Josh and Alan decided to make me "Director 2nd set". Alan wanted me to film nature sequences, close-ups, time-laps, as fill and background shots for his various songs for instance "We call this wind marija".

Alan and I went over to the Panavision people where I selected the film equipment I would need, to be sent to New York to my studio. I may have had no film-experience, but when it comes to equipment I know my

way. I was to stay a bit longer in Hollywood to help find a location in the Sierras for "Paint your Wagon". To look more professional I bought a frame viewer, a hand-held gadget held to the eye it sees what the camera sees. I hung it around my neck. We did not go, the Sierra was buried under 3 feet of new snow. I returned to New York.

I did not care for Hollywood, the more I learned about it the less I liked it. "superficiality" was the "Key-word", no sincerity, no real friends. The importance of appearance, the kind of a car one drove, status seemed paramount. The homes in the Hills, where even stray-cats are Siamese, surrounded by cypresses lit in garish greens and purple, looked more like nightclubs. I wondered what kind of children grew up in them. There is a joke which, it seems to me, fits this society: In Hollywood, how do you tell friends from enemies? The friends knife you in the front.

* * *

PRIMA-BALLERINA

Linda Merrill was a very beautiful woman, long legs, long neck, beautiful hands, small bosom, very white skin, red hair . **(photo)** She was born in Sweetwater Texas and now, at 22 danced as prima ballerina under George Balanchine.

I suggested Linda dance for me in a Connecticut meadow. Filmed in slow motion, combined with music and narration, I envisioned a splendid commercial for the American Cancer Society. I suggested it to the Society and got a green light. I told Linda, and she too seemed to like the idea . I invited her to talk about it in detail, and we, Alice and I, and Linda had lunch at Ruc, a Czech restaurant on 72nd street, well-known for its “Vepro-Zeli-Knedli” the Czech national dish of pork, kraut, and dumplings.

She brought Balanchine along, probably to check us out. After lunch we went to our studio, a block away, to show it to Linda and Balanchine and to discuss my TV commercial for the Cancer Society. Balanchine must have approved of us, because a few weeks later I picked Linda up at home, she lived on the west side near Broadway. “Did you bring your dress?” She had. I wanted it to be flowing, transparent, and white.

We drove to Teterboro airport where “Four- Five-Mike”, a Cessna 175, was parked. My friend Adelaide, the owner of the plane, had graciously loaned it to me while she spent the summer in her home in Normandy. I helped Linda into the right seat, then walked around the plane checking it out. I climbed in, checked Linda’s seat-belt, set the frequencies of the radio to Teterboro ground control and to the Omni near Danbury airport. Linda seemed very pale: “I told you we’ll fly, It’s



LINDA MERRILL

faster and simpler than fighting the traffic.” In fact, it was just an excuse, because, door to door it took an hour and a half by car, or 90 minutes by plane to reach our house in Sherman Ct. The visibility was 3 miles in haze and smog. It was a typical Manhattan summer day. Hot, humid, and noisy. The air acid from exhaust fumes. I started the engine, got permission to taxi to the active runway. I revved the engine to check the magnetos, and got in line with only two planes ahead of me I set my compass and altimeter. When I got “Clear for take-off “ I pushed the throttle to full power accelerating down the 3,000 foot runway.

On very hot days small planes do not really like to fly, but the “175” is an exception. When it reached speed it hardly needed pulling up, it just lifted and we were on our way. On the right Washington Bridge crammed with traffic. The horizon lost in smog, I leveled at 2000 feet for the short flight, and reduced the engine rpm. The flight-service station now reported a line of thunderstorms moving south-east over the Catskills. After we passed Westchester County Airport the visibility improved. Soon we passed Danbury airport, and flying lower now I followed route seven north, on the left Candlewood lake. At its tip I turned sharply west. I flew now at 1500 feet. There, on the ridge straight ahead stood our house. I buzzed it to let Alice know we are here, and proceeded west another two miles to land on Marty Muller’s 1,500 foot grass strip. Never mind in what direction the wind blows on this landing strip one should always land north, because it’s uphill.

Marty, my neighbor and friend, owns a Cessna 182, a grass strip, and a big log-house with a lovely view, and more. We call Marty’s strip “Muller International” airport. It is not shown on the sectional map. Hoving keeps his plane on Marty’s strip. Hoving’s is of modern design

and resembles an Ultra-light, but I suspected as engine it used a lawnmower's. Hoving once ask me for tape to fix something on his plane. I gave him some aluminum tape I had at home. He still is making holes in the sky above Quaker Hill. We landed and I helped Linda out. She did not kiss the ground, but I think she wanted to. I always reveled at the sudden transition from hot, humid, hazy, noisy Manhattan to the fresh, green quiet beauty of this Connecticut grass strip. A few minutes later Alice came to pick us up. I expected an assistant camera man to arrive soon with all equipment.

Mid-summer the Connecticut meadows are lush green, filled with wild flowers. Phillip Smith, a neighbor, owned over a hundred acres and I arranged for the "loan" of one of his meadows. The next morning was a beautiful day. I set out to film / produce my first TV commercial, setting up my equipment, a 35mm Arriflex on a low tripod and some aluminum reflectors to fill in shadows. The word, that I was filming for American Cancer, had spread. In spite of the remote location some local on-lookers had gathered. Alice helped Linda to dress and arrived with her at the meadow around 10am. Everything was just right. The location, the light, the weather, a light breeze, and most of all beautiful Linda. She did not just dance, but she flowed over the meadow. I enhanced her movements by slowing them down slightly, filming at 40 frames, instead of 24 per second.

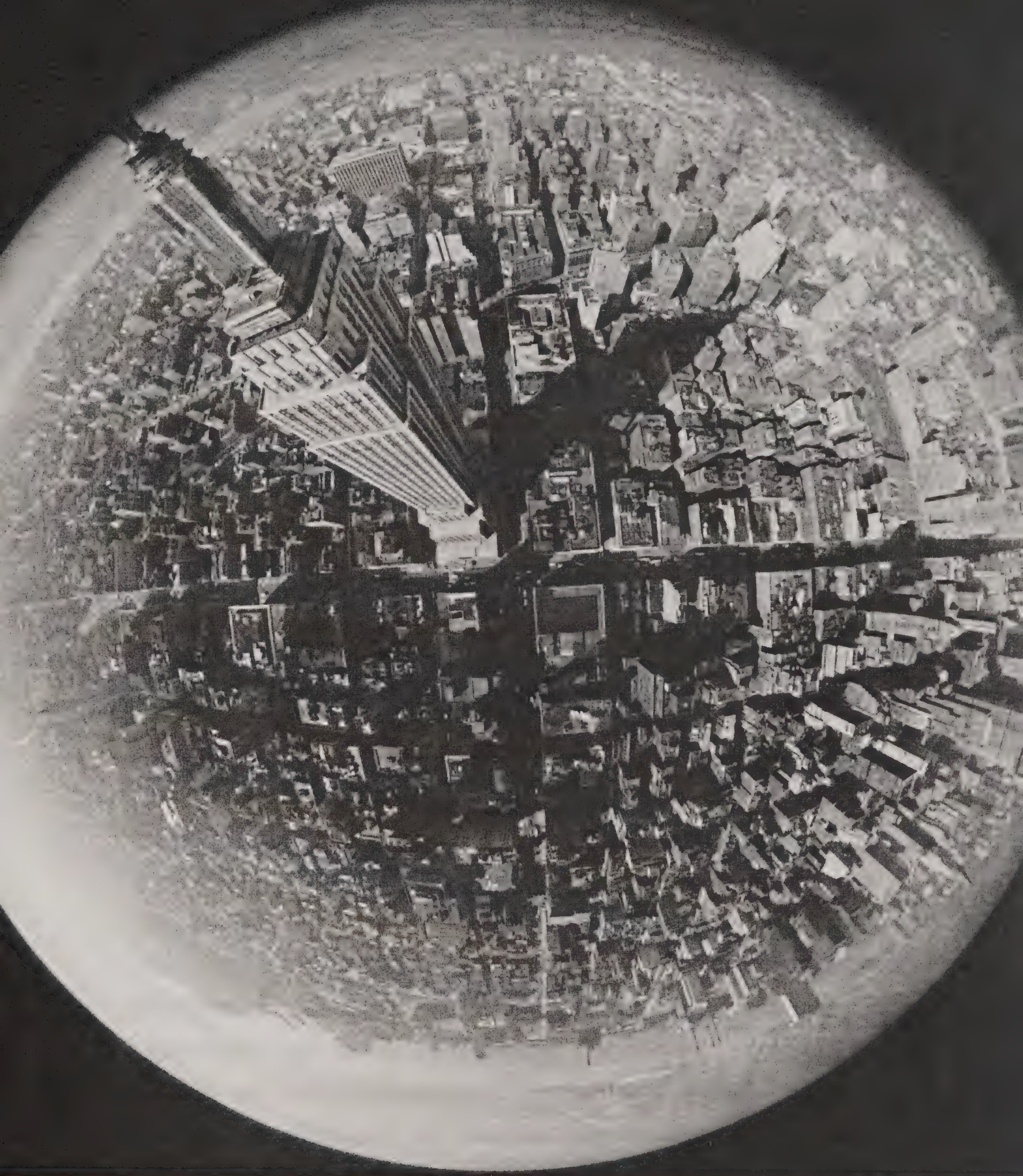
My footage was edited down to 1 minute. I called Montoya, a well-known soloist, to play his guitar to the projected image. I forgot who the narrator was, but the end result was perfection.

* * *

FISH-EYE

The fish-eye lens is a special effects, a wide-angle lens. This lens positioned at your navel would be able to see the tip of your nose, the tips of your feet, and the finger tips of your out-stretched hands. I used this lens effectively in aerial photography. I mated it to an electric 35mm Nikon camera, and attached it to a collapsible rod. When I changed to film, I mated it to a 35mm Arriflex suspended below a helicopter I designed a suspension rig for the Jet-Ranger.

The N.W.Ayer agency called. AT&T needed an unusual aerial photograph of Manhattan. I called my favorite pilot Al Cirillo of Island Helicopters, and explained him the job. Flying over the Empire State as low as possible. The wide-angle characteristic of the fish-eye is greatly enhanced if the lens is as close as possible to the object of attraction. In our case the Empire State Building. Al is the best. I used him whenever I could. So, by-the-way does Hollywood whenever they film in New York City. Al liked to work with me and he picked me up at the east-side heliport. The weather was perfect. We had unlimited visibility, essential when using a lens, which shows the horizon. I jumped into the jet-ranger carrying my Nikon attached to a long collapsible rod. The doors had been removed. I tightened my seat-belt and at about 300 feet I started to lower my Nikon down below the Jet-ranger by extending the rod. A water-level attached to the rod helped me keep it perpendicular, and the camera horizontal, a must when showing the entire horizon. We approached the Empire State and I started the electric sequence of photos timed to one exposure per second at a 1/1000 of a second per frame. We made a few passes with Al flying as low as he dared, FAA regulations notwithstanding. He flew so low that



FOR A.T. AND T.

my lens cut off most of the broadcast tower on top of the Empire State building. On the way home I accused Al of flying through a red light on six avenue. The photo turned out perfect. (photo) The Empire State of course dominated, but it also showed the Hudson and the East River, the downtown skyline, and what ever there is uptown.

I may not have been the first to use a fish-eye for aerial photography but later when I switched to film I was the first to film with a fish-eye from the air. It provided an, unusual visual effect. A tall building appears right-side up in the distance. When approaching it the building starts to lean toward the camera. After passing it appears upside down.

At first I produced experimental film footage and used it to sell my idea. At the end of a rod, to give the fish-eye an unobstructed view, I suspended a German WW-II combat 35mm camera, an Eimo, under the helicopter. I showed my idea to a producer Marce Mayhew, a very creative man and friend, and I said: To whom could I sell this ? Without hesitation he answered; Don't show it to anybody, I'll buy it – and he did. Together we made many award winning ads and TV commercials.

The fish-eye footage creates a round motion picture image and it formed the bases for the “Prudential World” (Prudential Insurance comp.)

The Prudential TV commercial was a major job, filmed entirely with a fish-eye from helicopters. My assistant, a Dutchman, Bernard Neuivenhouse was quiet and efficient. It was my first major film assignment and I was inexperienced and nervous. We traveled to Toronto, Los Angeles, Jacksonville, Houston and Chicago. In each city we rented a helicopter and mounted our helicopter-rig. It was an albatross, but the only one available at the time. An old awkward contraption. Clumsy and heavy. It was the very same rig used in the

film "The Longest Day". Dick DeBona of General Camera owned it and suggested I rent it from him. In Houston my assistant mounted the rig into the helicopter, a Bell J-2.(photo) It's a good, but underpowered helicopter. The doors had been removed. I told the pilot to find the Prudential building which as a rule was downtown and the tallest building, sticking out and a phallic symbol, easy to find. We took off, but could not find the building. Over the engine-noise, no doors, The pilot screamed: "What now"?? I shouted, pointing at a gas station, "land".

We did, and I jumped out and used a pay-phone to find out where, the hell, the Prudential building was hiding! It was not downtown but near the Astro-dome.

In another scene in the Prudential commercial I had to capture a freight train rolling in the vast flat lands west of Minneapolis, where railroad tracks run straight for miles on end. But how does one rendezvous with a freight train in the middle of "nowhere" ? ' They do not run on fixed schedules. I studied aerial sectional maps. Regular maps do not always show railroad tracks. I found a spot where two tracks, a mile apart, ran completely straight for miles east - west. I called the railroad company in Minneapolis to find out when freight-trains will be rolling our way, but was unable to get a clear answer. I said to my pilot let's gamble, let's just take off and find these straight tracks first, but he urged: We are very heavy (three men and the rig) please leave your client and your assistant here. We had flown in from Minneapolis, and I did not even know where we were. I explained to Marce and Bernard the problem and they settled down in the airport cafeteria.

We took off and flew at 250 feet watching out for broadcast towers, tall chimneys. I sat in the open door feet dangling out. It was amazing to

look down at the passing scene. into the backyards of houses. Many had airstrips and single engine planes. After an hour we arrived over the tracks. Of course no train in sight. The pilot yelled "What now". I pointed out the nearest airport on my sectional map and we landed. It was an airport from the past, a relic, old-fashioned, a left-over from the barn-storming days. It had one hard surface runway and two hangers. Again I called the railroad company in Minneapolis to find out when we could expect a freight-train. This time we were in luck. A train will be coming through in about two hours. Nervously pacing I waited. We had left my client and assistant two hours ago on a little airport, whose name I never knew. I could not get in touch with them. My pilot refueled the tanks to half capacity to stay light, and with 25 minutes to go we took off for our crucial rendezvous. We arrived 10 minutes early and circled until on the horizon a reddish-yellow light appeared. It was the headlight of the locomotive.

A few minutes more and the train was close enough to line up the helicopter with the tracks. I yelled, please fly as low as you can, but, please look out for over-passes! My fish-eye lens pointed straight down, but took in everything from horizon to horizon, including, of course the approaching train. We flew now at 50 feet above the tracks. I was holding the camera-rod perpendicular. I switched on my camera, and after a few seconds I saw the locomotive swishing by. The train was long and I kept the camera rolling, but something seemed wrong. The sun had disappeared behind a little cloud, the only one in the sky, exactly for the duration of the train rolling by. The f-stop (exposure) was preset for sunlight, and the camera below the belly of the copter way out of reach. The result would be a slightly underexposed sequence with a muddy look, a poor match to the other scenes all

filmed in bright sunlight. I had to re-shoot, I had no choice. Over the strong objections of my pilot we had to get ahead of the train and try it again. Easier said than done. Out there the freight trains travel fast, about 65 miles per hour, which was the cruising speed of the G-2. The pilot to over-take the train had to run the engine at take-off power, something pilots do only when they take off. What seemed an eternity, about 10 minutes, slowly, very slowly, we crawled ahead of the train next to us. When we were finally next to the locomotive The pilot, looking at me, OK?? I shook my head. We had to be at least 500 feet ahead of the locomotive to get the opening footage I needed. Another three minutes full power and the pilot made a U-turn lined up with the tracks, I rolled my camera, and the sun kept shining. Five hours, after I left my client and assistant at the no-name god-forsaken airport somewhere in Minnesota we came back. Marce was angry and did not talk to me until the next day after we looked at the dailies in a projection room in Hollywood.

The fish-eye effect was stunning and new, Not only the Prudential buildings in Toronto, Los Angeles, Chicago and Jacksonville, but also the train footage were great. Marce and I embraced --- we spoke again. Marce had taken a risk. I had no film experience, none. Nevertheless the result was a 3 minute TV commercial. We won the 1969 International Film Festival Award.

* * *

MACH 2.00

Flying at twice the speed of sound, (photo) Alice and I had to try it. We took the Concord to London Heathrow. The passenger cabin is not as spacious, but so what. The flight to London is almost over before it begins, or so it seemed. The speed indicator, in the front of the cabin, reads Mach 2.00. We are flying at twice the speed of sound. The little round cabin windows provide not much of a view, but up front, the cockpit door is open, I walked up the aisle and was invited to enter. Standing behind the pilot I got a panoramic view and could clearly see the curvature of the earth. We were flying at 52 thousand feet, 10 miles up.

We are served dinner, pate de-foi-gras, Iranian Caviar, wine, and more. Alice does not eat Caviar, but I do. Alice talked to a man across the aisle. He looked familiar. It was John Travolta. They are talking about horses and cowboy boots. The flight lasted a little over 3 hours. We rented a car and within one hour we checked into the Wessex, a hotel in Winchester. The window of our room is open. It looks out on to the Cathedral. very beautiful and very old. It is only 100 yards away. I turned on the TV. Incredibly, on the screen is my commercial: the "Duracell Bunny". The cute thing is drumming away. So are his brothers, but they soon stop because they are not driven by Duracell batteries. When Dancer Fitzgerald advertising comp. called me to bid on this commercial I had of course no idea that it was to become one of the most successful TV commercials ever made.

Let me digress for a moment. How successful this TV commercial really was revealed itself to me in the Austrian Alps. During a visit to Vienna, Ernst, a friend of mine, invited me to join him on a drive to the



CONCORD AIRCRAFT 2100 ON THE CONCORD

Semmering, 70 km south of Vienna, in the mountains. He picked me up at my hotel, the Inter-Continental, modern, convenient, but commercial, located across from the Stadtpark, Vienna's central park. It was a beautiful September morning, cool, but not cold. The road smooth, a super highway, The air crisp and clear, the landscape well kept and still colorful. Ernst has a prestigious job. He was the director of the TGM, a well-known school where I graduated in 1937 as an electrical engineer. We were cruising at 120 km per hour. The villages passed by fast, their names familiar, each reminding me of my youth and boy scout days. Ernst now explains the purpose of this trip. He is, as most Austrians, Roman Catholic. He also is a lay-priest. He had committed himself to hold a memorial mass in remembrance of his village-priest who had been killed by the Gestapo in 1945, one day before the war ended. We arrived at our destination, the Sonnentstein, at noon. We took the ski-lift. The mass was to be held in a modern chapel on top of the mountain, 4000 feet above sea-level. The modern chapel appeared to me more Lutheran than Catholic because of its simple interior but, with a glorious view. During the oration I stood silent thinking of the Jewish multitudes who had disappeared. Afterwards Ernst and I went to a restaurant slightly below the summit. It had outdoor tables and we had the traditional Würstel mit Krehn, und eine Kaiser semmel, Sausages and horse radish and a Emperor's roll served on a paper plate. We were joined by a small group forming an orchestra --- Accordions, trumpets, violins. They were typical Austrians from the mountains, dressed in typical mountain garb. We sat around the table. They spoke with a heavy dialect which I understood and even could imitate if I wanted to. They sounded and looked to me like men from another planet.

Ernst, pointing at me, introduced me. he said: “Der ist ein Amerikaner. Er ist der Mann, der das Kaninchen gmacht’ hat am TV, das trommelt.” He is an American, the guy who made the drumming Bunny TV commercial. The musician’s faces changed into a broad smile and we shook hands. It was a strange experience that I did have something in common with these beer-bellied Austrians in their Lederhosen from another world. Probably I could have had the same experience on the South Sandwich Islands.

The idea for this commercial originated in the creative department of Dancer Fitzgerald. Sandy Semmel was the agency producer. I was the outside producer and director/cameraman. It was filmed in our stage on East 74 street. I used “bounce”-light, a technique rarely used in the film industry before 1970. It is light reflected from a white surface giving wonderfully gentle shadow less light. I needed shadowless lighting since I had 15 bunnies crowding the field.(photo) I used my 35mm Arriflex with a prime-lens, however, the last sequence was filmed with my snorkel lens attached to the Arri moving in on the Duracell battery hidden in the bunny’s leg. The production and filming was not difficult. Later I filmed six additional Duracell commercials based on the same idea. My Bunny just kept going. Later the idea was simply seized by the competitor and it became the “Energizer Bunny”. It’s still on the air 25 years later.

* * *

THE U.S. NAVY AND I

My attraction to machinery in general, a fondness I had since I was a little boy, combined with my knowledge of engineering inspired me to use optical, electronic, and other high-tech equipment to achieve unusual and striking film visuals. It was natural that I investigated the commercial use of high-speed movie cameras. I had become known for my special cameras, special lenses and special rigs for photo-cine micrography, for aerial filming, high-speed filming, extreme close-ups. I had little competition. I introduced extreme slow motion into the commercial TV field. This was the time before computers and

many effects were created in the camera. One of my first slow motion TV commercials was the Downey fabric softener bottle falling into a stack of towels. The towels appear soft and cuddly. I held the bottle in front of the lens and when my Mitchell camera, pointing straight down, reached, 100 frames per second, I dropped the bottle giving it a twist. Other effects -- Drops falling slowly through the frame, Cereals and liquids pouring, a popcorn popping, a soap bubble bursting, a camera exploding, endless possibilities. It provided eye catching film sequences. I greatly enhanced visual quality by using strobe light instead of incandescent light, Each frame was lit by one flash which was set off synchronized to each frame. It's very technical but it works.

One day my accountant ask me: What's so special about this Photosonic camera, that you have to fly to California to pick it up ? You spend a lot of money renting it. Why don't you buy one ?

Photosonics Comp. manufactured high-speed cameras. Many companies do, but there's was the only camera world-wide using 35mm film, which is the standard for TV commercials. Fundamentally high-

TV studio to Danbury for low rent

by Bob Chuvala
News-Times business editor

DANBURY — You probably don't know his name, but you most certainly know Herbert Loebel's work — if, that is, you've ever seen a bottle of Downy fabric softener fall into a pile of towels or a Duracell battery slam close at the end of a television commercial.

Loebel has directed more than 300 commercials or special-effects portions of them during the past 18 years as one of Manhattan's top directors of television commercials.

Now he has moved his studio lock, stock and camera to Precision Road on the west side of Danbury, where he plans to continue his national commercial work and tap into the region's booming potential as well.

Loebel is just putting the finishing touches on his 2,000-square-foot stage area, complete with an array of theatrical lights, television equipment and the high-speed movie camera that can capture drips from a faucet.

In Manhattan Loebel Productions had a 600-square-foot obstructed shooting area — at a price that only Manhattan landlords can demand.

And Loebel's Manhattan landlord was demanding even more, tripling the studio's rent effective this past January 1. "That's when I said I've had it," said the 68-year-old Loebel last week. "I was unwilling to pay triple rent for the space I had, I didn't want to start a large studio in New York, and I wanted to be close to home."

Home for Loebel and his wife of 35 years, Alice, is a top house with a 30-mile view in Sherman. The couple had a Manhattan apartment as well, but the rent on that also skyrocketed. "Instead of retiring on the hill in Sherman, I thought I would keep working." But not in Manhattan, where Loebel had built a reputation for himself through "four or five Clio's" — the advertising industry's car award — and uncounted other advertising industry awards for his series of innovative commercials.

"I don't know how many there are," he said of his awards. "Would you believe I threw out or lost these awards?" It's because "I hold awards in very low esteem," he said, "I don't believe much in them."

What he does believe in is creating television commercials that are good enough to win awards from his peers. In an occupation he almost accidentally dropped into in 1968 after working for 20 years as a respected industrial and commercial still photographer in New York.

His first television commercial grew out of an interest he was developing in filming fresh-water organisms through a microscope. Coincidentally a major Manhattan advertising agency, Young and Rubicam, was looking for a cinematographer able to film through a microscope. He landed the job, which turned out to be for Union Carbide, back when they called themselves "The Discovery Company."

That commercial, touting Carbide's pollution control efforts, won Loebel a Clio, and he was on his way. The next year he won another Clio for a Prudential commercial in which Loebel filmed various cities and sites around the country through a fisheye lens on a camera suspended from a helicopter. The idea for that commercial came from his use of a fisheye lens on a still camera. "I took my knowledge of still photography and transferred it to film," he said.

See STUDIO, Page C-2



Herbert Loebel of Sherman, amid his studio equipment for the staging of television's sponsored messages -- the commercials.

News-Times/David W

PHOTOSONIC CALIBER

speed filming means to film an event at thousands of frames per second. For instance, if an event was filmed at 3000 frames per second and projected at normal speed which is 30 frames per second, the event is slowed down a hundred times. If the impact and scatter of a falling oil drop on a glass plate lasts a hundreds of a second in reality, when filmed at 3,000 frames will last one-hundred times as long or one second on a screen. A milk drop disintegrating, but slowed down a hundred times looks astounding.

To achieve this effect Photosonic cameras must pull 35mm film through the camera at high speed without tearing it. A task necessitating power, gradual acceleration, precision engineering, special optics and machinery. The military use the Photosonic to film events which need to be analyzed in detail, frame by frame. When the shuttle takes off about 4 Photosonic cameras film the event. If anything would go wrong the film's frames, each pin sharp, would reveal the problem exactly. The only competitors at the time were the Japanese. They made a camera which took up to 10,000 frames per second, but in 16mm. I owned one of those cameras and captured a soap-bubble bursting a very short event. At 10,000 frames the burst looks astonishingly different from what one would expect. The bubble, after bursting, does not collapse but retains its shape peeling itself back and disappears.

My accountant wanted me to buy a Photosonic, but it was strictly a military camera. Nevertheless, the next time in Burbank to rent one, I said to Conrad, I would like to place an order for a camera. He disappeared into the boss' office and came back after a while. It's \$ 55,000 and we can sell you one by adding it when the Navy places its next order. About a year later I got my camera, (photo) the first and only civilian owned Photosonic. It was an investment that paid off. Owning

this camera made me more competitive and flexible. My competitors had to rent and often the one camera Photosonic kept in rental was not available. Moreover, rental equipment is poorly treated and always inferior to privately owned equipment. I made many improvements to the camera. I mated it to a large, 25 to 250mm zoom-lens with a split-beam viewfinder. The lens weighed 30 pounds. It was one of three lenses surviving in Hollywood from the so called “rack-over” days.

There was only one more Photosonic like it in the world. It was owned by the British film equipment rental company Samuelson Ltd. in London and rented for thousands a day. With that special zoom-lens lens my Photosonic became a reflex-camera. I was able to observe the event I filmed through the lens, something other Photosonics can not do. I sold it years later, when I retired, for a good sum.

I have to mention Ray Emeritz. He was the chief mechanic at General Camera, Panavision’s east coast branch. Ray was, and is, a mechanic’s mechanic. Innovative, a high precision machinist. We worked together on a few projects. I was able to put my idea on paper by making technical drawings and Ray followed, and improved on them. We worked on the introduction of “Video-assist” filming and video tape simultaneously.

Before its introduction, clients, directors, producers and actors did not know if a film-take was “good” -- successful, and it had to be left to the cameraman, the only one who saw it through his lens. With video-assist the take was played back on video and the director, actor and cameraman were able to improve what ever they did. In the end everybody knew if it was good and iof it was “in the can”. I was one of the first to use video-assist on everything I filmed. I was ridiculed for what my detractors called prolonging the shoot—increasing O.T. over-

time for the crew. Today, one could simply not imagine filming without video-assist. It would be, as it was before video-assist just hit and miss.

* * *

MY WIFE ALICE

Doctor Mayer was a chemist and friend of Einstein. He was an executive at the "Aussiger Chemische" a large chemical company head-quartered at Aussig in the Czech republic near the German border. Hilda, doctor Mayer's daughter, was raised in their home in Karlsbad, the famous spa, 60 miles from the company's head-quarter.

The Mayers were Jewish. Surrounded by Germans eager to become a part of Gross-Deutschland, Hitler's "Greater Germany" the Mayers emigrated early to the United States. Mr. Mayer, unable to get his daughter a visa to the States, got her one to Buenos Aires, where Hilda befriended Alice the woman I was to marry.

Alice Theresa Devine was born in Prescott Arizona. Her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Bean Tappan came from Gilmanton New Hampshire and Baltimore Maryland. They came as pioneers to Arizona where, in 1891 in Flagstaff their daughter, Alice's mother, Edith Gordon Tappan, was born. She married Vincent Montgomery Devine. They had three daughters, Mary, Eleanor and Alice. She was the youngest. Vincent Montgomery Devine however left, for South-America when Alice was 6 months old. She never saw him again. He was killed by an Indian in Asuncion Paraguay. Her mother moved with two of her girls to a farm near Phoenix, and Alice grew up with her grandparents on their ranch "Los Alamos" located along the Bill Williams river near the old wagon-route to California.

Alice' mother died early, but from the bits and pieces I know she was a remarkable woman, who had the misfortune to live in an environment most inappropriate to finding an eligible bachelor. A



ALICE IN VIENNA

great photograph of her survived (**photo**) showing a woman in blue-jeans on horse-back. The photo reveals beauty, youth, style and courage. I am sorry I never met her as my mother-in-law.

In 1968 Alice and I visited the ranch on which she grew up. It is now a state-park. These are truly the wide-open spaces: desert, lonesome, wild, birds of pray circling the endless sky, Rattlesnakes, tall Saguaro Cacti standing like sentinels guarding this silent mysteriously beautiful scenery.

In 1924, when my French governess used to pick me up from school to take me for a walk in the Belveder park, overlooking Vienna, Alice reconnoitered the desert riding bare-back her pony. When I came home crying with a bloody knee, having fallen off my two-wheeler seeking mother's consolation, Alice was limping home crying, having fallen off her horse, but got no consolation. Instead, her mother admonished her. How often did I tell you never, never, to let the reins go. How can I find you if the horse comes home alone ?

While I loved the telephone switch-board in our entrance hall, Alice knew where the "Roman Candles" were kept. There was no telephone on the Ranch, and in an emergency these candles were fired to notify the neighbors, the nearest one 20 miles away. Of course, they could be used only at night. --- Our backgrounds were quite different.

Alice left home and after holding various jobs she came via Carmel alifornia to Chicago. The war was raging she wanted to help. but, did not want to join the WACCS. Her mother advised against her working for the Red Cross, because she could not stand the sight of blood. When a job was offered her by vice-president's Henry

Wallace' office to work for the Board of Economic Warfare in Buenos Aires she took it. Alice met Hilda Mayer there. Both came after the war to New York. Hilda knew Anni, the woman I shared Ribbentrop's apartment with, from Karlsbad. Of course I met Hilda and she introduced me to Alice.

Alice was a beautiful woman, feminine, and often mistakenly stopped on the street as Ingrid Bergman --- there was a great resemblance. Alice lived at 10 Downing Street in the Village. I proposed to her in the bar of the 5th Avenue Hotel and she said: "Out of question." Some times later, 1952, we were married in Pawling NY. I was 35, and in spite of my age and experiences immature and filled with hang-ups, acquired during my screwed-up childhood. To be precise during my formative years. Our different backgrounds created no problems, but my past now ganged up on me. I began to have bouts with Insomnia. My doctor prescribed sleeping pills, little red pills. They gave me relaxation and sleep.

I never cared for alcohol, and when friends came over for a drink I would sit silently on the side watching them relax and become talkative. Why not join them? I had a "brilliant" idea. Why not take one of those little red pills? I did, and in no time I too relaxed and became talkative. My "good" doctor, who had prescribed the pills, never, ever, even hinted to me that they were dangerous -- habit-forming, and toxic. As time passed, in order to sleep I had to increase the dose. After a while even this did not help. I called my friend doctor Eric Nash with my problem. He told me: "Herbert, you are now taking 300 mg of Seconal daily. This is a high dose. Do you know, Herby, if you feed 300 milligram to your cat it dies" I would recommend you go into psycho-analysis. I did.

It was a rude awakening when finally my mad past caught up with me. both, Alice, the poor woman, and I suffered through it. I started to sleep again, without pills, and almost became a human being.

* * *

BRIGHT ANGEL TRAIL

In 1986 Alice wanted to follow in her grandmother's steps, who was the first white woman down into the canyon. I found myself sitting on a mule following Alice and twelve other tourists from all over the world down the trail. It was an unusual and thrilling experience. The breathtaking beauty, color, dimension and depth of the canyon combined with the mule's insistence to walk at the very edge of the already narrow trail, the edge falling off about thousands feet down to the Colorado river, made it even more exciting. I never sat on a horse, except my rocking horse before and now I was told to whip my mule with a small whip to follow closely the mule ahead. Hit my mule? Out of question, and particularly in those hairpin turns.

Our leader was a cowboy. Middle-aged, wind burned face, plus the characteristic hat, his boots seemed too small, his legs seemed bowlegged and the rest of his attire, typical, as I saw it in the movies long before I came to the States. Alice, on the second mule behind the weathered cowboy, before arriving at the bottom of the Grand Canyon found out that he and she had been delivered in the same clinic in Prescott by the same doctor, Dr. Loony. We stayed over night and the return trip seemed easier, less frightening, there was less opportunity to look down thousands of feet. I definitely would not recommend this trip to anyone suffering from Acrophobia.

* * *



1890



HERB + HICE

1986

BRIGGS HILL

Alice and I, spent weekends in Sherman Connecticut. Our friends Ted Adams and Johnny Quarles had a house there, 90 minutes from Manhattan. The house, a converted barn with swimming pool, was surrounded by forest. It was quiet and remote. We spent many weekends at Ted's house.

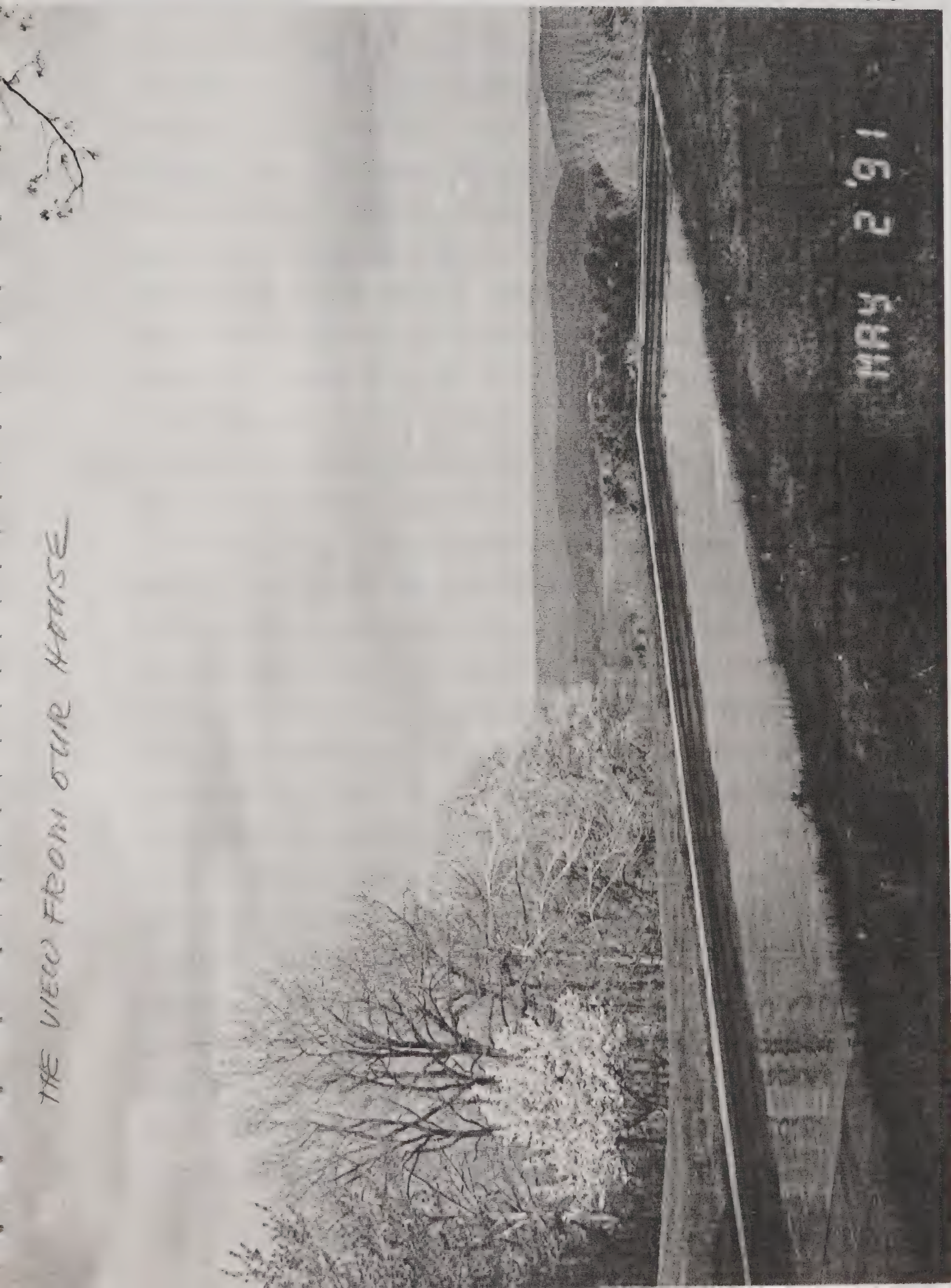
One day, ca. 1950, Ted said: "Adjacent to our property are 12 acres for sale for \$ 1,200.00. It's so inexpensive because it's land-locked property. It had no access from a public road. It may have been inexpensive, but we did not have \$1,200 to spare at the time.

About 10 years later we had the money and wondered whether the 12 acres were still available. The owner, Mr. Giddings, was a prison warden at the Green Haven federal penitentiary. He lived in Pawling. The land had not been sold. Our friend Ted agreed to sell us three of his 6 acres to give us access to a public road. We also bought some smaller parcels and became the proud owners of 19 acres. Nineteen very secluded acres of forest forming a hilltop 1,100 feet above sea level.

In 1965 we commissioned an architect and he built our dream-house, and a dream it was with a magnificent 15 mile view. **(photo)**

The builder followed our simple specifications: A contemporary house. A living room 20 by 30 feet with a cathedral ceiling, large glass-doors facing into the view, and the bedroom with large glass-doors facing into the forest. It was an unusual house,. The siding, as well as the inside, were Philippine Mahogany. The sliding doors, made in California, were black anodized aluminum frames.

THE VIEW FROM OUR HOUSE



MAY 2, 1916

On the hill, the four seasons, particularly the fall foliage, were beautiful. It was the highest house in Sherman, with elaborate lightning protection. The house faced east, with a clear view all the way to Roxbury. The north-Easter rain and snow storms, the thunderstorms, the large sky with its cloud-formations, The stars, at times, I was able to see Andromeda with the unaided eye were of great beauty. We had a large deck facing into the view. We loved our birds ranging from our steady seasonal guests the Bluebirds to birds of prey, circling overhead without flapping their wings, enjoying the updraft above the house.

Wild-life ranged from carpenter bees to occasional foxes. Deer were so plentiful, we called them rodents. The carpenter bees, very clumsy and big, but harmless, except for the precision holes they drilled into our wooden siding. I watched them and used to say: "This thing will never fly", but they did, bumping into each other above our rectangular 50 foot swimming-pool. On top of the hill was a steady breeze, and, I believe, it was the reason for the lack of biting insects. We did not have to keep our screen doors closed. And then there were the Raccoons, enchanting and intelligent. I never forgot a Raccoon mother dropping by to show off her 7 little ones, running behind her, all keeping body contact. The little ones timid, but curious. I had told Alice I do not want to feed the Raccoons anymore. They had become a pest, but when I saw this Raccoon family my resistance melted away.

Neighbor's warned me about the danger of Rabies, but from my experience a Raccoon with rabies is easy to spot. It is solitary and does not eat. In all these years I only saw two infected ones. One was sitting in the middle of our driveway unwilling to move when my car approached, but looking alert. Another Raccoon behaved strangely with foam at his mouth. Alice hung brightly colored ribbons on the large

glass doors to keep birds from colliding with the mirror-image of sky and scapes. Some were unlucky and did. This gave them a great “head-ache”, but Alice gave them first aid then put them in a bird-cage. When Alice felt they were able to fly, we placed the cage with the door open on the deck and more often than not the little thing took off and we cheered.

The privacy, tranquility and proximity of nature was special. I recall a Bluebird episode which did not fit common knowledge. Alice monitored the brood, five tiny birds. Ma and Pa were feeding the young but something seemed wrong. I looked into the nest and agreed. Ma and Pa sat in a nearby tree and watched us removing the tiny ones. I laid them out on the kitchen table covered with a towel. On inspecting the nest we discovered that it was infected with mites. While Alice cleaned out the bluebird house and sprayed it with Lysol, I cleaned the babies with soap and water using cue-tips. We exchanged the twigs, formed a new nest and replaced the little birds. In no time mother and father Bluebird returned and continued to raise the family. This contradicted the old wisdom not to ever touch a baby-bird.

We had neighbors. Bill Piel to the south-east, Adrian deWind west, and David Peck to the north. They were Interesting men. Adrian deWind owned a hundred acres and was President of the NY bar association. He also presided over a far left sometimes destructive environmental activist group, the National Resources Defense Council. Bill Piel owned 50 acres and was a well known lawyer. His brother, Gerald was the editor of the Scientific American magazine.

And David W. Peck owned 50 acres and was a former justice of the NY Supreme court. After the end of WW-II he was appointed by the high commissioner of Germany John McCloy to head an investigation

into the possibility of clemency for Alfred Krupp one among 90 other German war criminals. Peck's was known as the Peck panel. When I met him I had no idea who he was. I only knew that a narrow strip of his land blocked entrance to the 12 acres Alice and I had bought. If we could get from Peck a right of way, it involved 50 feet, we did not have to deprive our friend Ted Adams of half of his property. Alice and I drove over to Peck's house, and the honorable Judge listened to us and said NO. Nevertheless we became next-door neighbors. Peck visited us twice in about 10 years. Once he just dropped by to look at the house, and mumbled, you did a nice job. He was pompous. Once he came to watch a movie I showed to all my neighbors "The KGB Connection". But it was not until after we had lived on the hill for three years that I discovered the major role Peck played in helping set Alfried Krupp and 49 other war-criminals free.

Our friend Adelaide de Menil and her husband Edmund Carpenter, a well-known anthropologist, associated for a time with Marshall McLuhan, had invited us to join them in New Guinea, where Ted studied the influence of the transistor radio on primitive society. The flight to Sidney Australia takes 23 hours. To alleviate the boredom I took with me Manchester's "The Guns of Krupp". After leaving Hawaii, shortly before Fiji, on page 647 I discovered that my neighbor David Peck was either an evil man, or just ignorant. What riled me was not that he helped recover to Alfried Krupp's fortune, Alfried was just a playboy. But Peck indiscriminately helped free all the other war-criminals, I believe 89 in all. Among them were five of the most dreadful of Himmler's Jew-killers. They were the leaders of the so called "Einsatzgruppen", the SS killer battalions following closely behind the invading German army into Poland and Russia where they rounded up their Jewish victims,

using the element of surprise. 1.6 million were killed in this manner, machine-gunned into mass-graves. I came to know the “honorable” Peck, running into him walking on nearby roads. I do not think he understood what he had done. He was just ignorant. Anyway, what could, or should I have done at this point?

* * *

NEW GUINEA, 1969

In 1969, flying half-way around the world, Hawaii, Fiji, Sidney, Port Moresby, we joined our dear friends Addie and Ted in Goroka a village in New Guinea. It was an amazing experience to be transferred suddenly to encounter a people who were 10,000 years back in time. They seemed to be of Negro-Arab, more Arab descent. Their skin was not black, but brown. Some had distinct almost western faces. Small of stature their life-expectancy low, about thirty. Soap was unknown. They rubbed their skin with pig's grease and had an intensive body-odor. (photo) At home they were nude, but when they traveled to the "city" many wore a kind of skirt made of long green leafs. On their skin I noticed a white pattern which, at first, I thought to be a tattoo, but turned out to be a fungus. Men and women, even children smoked what may have been tobacco rolled into crude cigarettes. In addition under their huts, which were on stilts, they kept a fire going to produce smoke. The smoke penetrated the floor and left through the thatched roof. It helped keeping the Mosquitoes away. Even when using their dug-out canoes they had a smoke fire going in the front as a Mosquito repellent. This constant exposure to smoke must have had a dreadful effect on their lungs. At night I could hear them coughing and coughing. Ted caustically referred to it as "Marlborough land". Beetle-nut chewing was common. It colored their teeth reddish. The climate in the highlands was comfortable, cold at night. In the lowlands the humidity was oppressive. We lived and traveled in a houseboat owned and operated by Master Wayne, a big handsome Australian from Tasmania. He spoke the dialect of the natives. Our highway was the Sepik river, the river where young Rockefeller had drowned the year before. When



NEW GUINEA 1965

ALICE KNEW GUNDS
BORN 1917
3300 h



traveling on tributaries we used a dug-out canoe. It was of course smaller but quite long about 50 feet, however, like all canoes it had poor side to side stability. The outboard motor and gasoline drums were in the rear. In front, covered with a tarpaulin, was food and other supply. Five aluminum folding garden chairs were the seating arrangement. At the bow sat a look-out and master Wayne operated the motor in the rear. We traveled long stretches up the Karawari river. In the trees lining the river hang the largest bats. At dusk they came out to fly. I estimated their wing-span to be about 6 feet.

Alice, doing her needle-point, Addie and I photographing, and Ted observing from the side-lines, making caustic remarks. The men decorated their faces with paint, feathers and other objects. I never saw a man work, however, the women I never saw not work. Their tools were primitive, some were stone-tools. A woman crushing pulp, white stuff inside a hollowed tree trunk using a stone-tool attracted my attention. I ask her to sell me the tool, flashing an Australian Dollar. Somehow she communicated that first she has to go home and ask her husband's permission. She got it and the stone tool now decorates the wall above our fireplace. When we arrived in these villages it seemed we were a welcome distraction, interrupting the humdrum of the day. Many had never seen a white woman before. Most of the native women were pregnant, breast-feeding babies, however, these people did not connect intercourse and pregnancy. I heard that men did not believe to be the father of children unless they dreamed about it. Pigs were pets and food. They were also a measure of wealth. It's hard to believe, but many women breast-fed their piglets.

We were sitting around a table in our hut in Mintamin. There was a knock at the door. A native came limping in. He had stepped on a

sharp object and hurt himself. "Doctor" Loebel provided first aid. Sitting at the table, I placed the man in a chair across mine and placed his injured foot on the table in front of me to inspect his injury. The man did not have gray hair yet, he was maybe twenty. His foot-soles had never known the benefit of shoes. It was a deep cut. After cleaning the bleeding injury his foot-sole's cross section revealed by the cut was at least half an inch thick. It seemed to have many layers. After applying a disinfectant I covered it with an elaborate white bandage. He was very proud of it. Proud was also another man Addie had photographed. She handed him the Polaroid portrait. He recognized himself and attached it to his forehead. A day later he still displayed it attached to his forehead.

Mount Hagen is the largest city in New Guinea. It had motels and a movie theater. "Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" was being shown. Only Addie and I went to see it. The theater was filled with New Guineans. I was amazed to see these people go almost out of control when sex or violence filled the screen. They jumped on their seats gesticulating and shouting.

We left Addie and Ted to fly home via Singapore and London. New Guinea was an unforgettable experience. It was sad to see half the population, the women, in slavery. Working in the fields, collecting firewood, bearing children and raising them was their occupation. The climate and the environment did not pose a direct danger to the peoples well-being, but they had no defense against disease, none. Even a simple cut could lead to blood-poisoning and death. Our appearance called to their attention, or reminded them, that there is out there another, probably better world. In their faces, I seemed to detect a yearning for it.

In Ambunti Alice attracted an audience. About 50 children surrounded her. She stood in the center and sang and directed the kids to sing: "Mary had a little lamb, ee-ii-ee-ii ooh". The children were not just delighted to sing but went over-board, jumping for joy, singing, laughing. I captured it with my camera, an uplifting, delightful scene.(Photo)

* * *

MICROSCOPY

To master optical microscopy, understanding optics, methods of lighting, handling of precision devices, patience, and manual dexterity are needed. I was lucky to have these skills. Our hill in Connecticut was an ideal place far from any vibrations, the enemy of high magnification. In the late Sixties I started to get involved. It captivated me and soon I was so immersed that Alice had to remind me to quit. Herby, it's two a.m.! Again, as in high speed filming, I had little competition. There were of course many scientists at least as good or better, but none of them was thinking in terms of graphic commercial applications. I mated my microscope successfully to 16mm, to 35mm, even to 70mm movie-cameras. The ideal camera for the microscope, however, is the 16mm Bolex weighing 15 pounds. The 35mm Arriflex weighs 25 pounds, and the 70mm Imax camera can weigh up to 50 pounds and more. Soon, in 1969, I received my first commercial microscope assignment.

Young and Roubicam wanted me to film through the microscope a TV commercial for Union Carbide: Its title was: "Rodney the Rotifer". What's a Rotifer? The encyclopedia has this to say:

Rotifera (wheel animalcules) numbers approximately 1,800 species, which are found primarily in fresh-water environments, Microscopic in size, rotifers generally feed on organic materials like bacteria, protozoans, and detritus, although a few species are carnivorous. Locomotion is accomplished by means of beating cilia – little whips.

The concept of this commercial was to show these micro-organisms eating, and eating, organic materials polluting water and by doing so cleaning it. I ordered Rotifers from a biological supply house in South

Carolina, and put a drop on a glass-slide, dropped a cover glass on it and placed it on the microscope stage. I will always remember these enigmatic animals when I saw them 200 times magnified in black-field lighting, each one round and rotating clockwise on, and on, They were also one of the very first animals the inventor of the microscope Leeuwenhoek saw back in 1673. I filmed about 30 minutes on Rotifers which were then edited down to a 30 second TV commercial. We won a CLIO. Now I had two award-winning commercials on my "Reel", One filmed from helicopters, the other through the microscope.

* * *

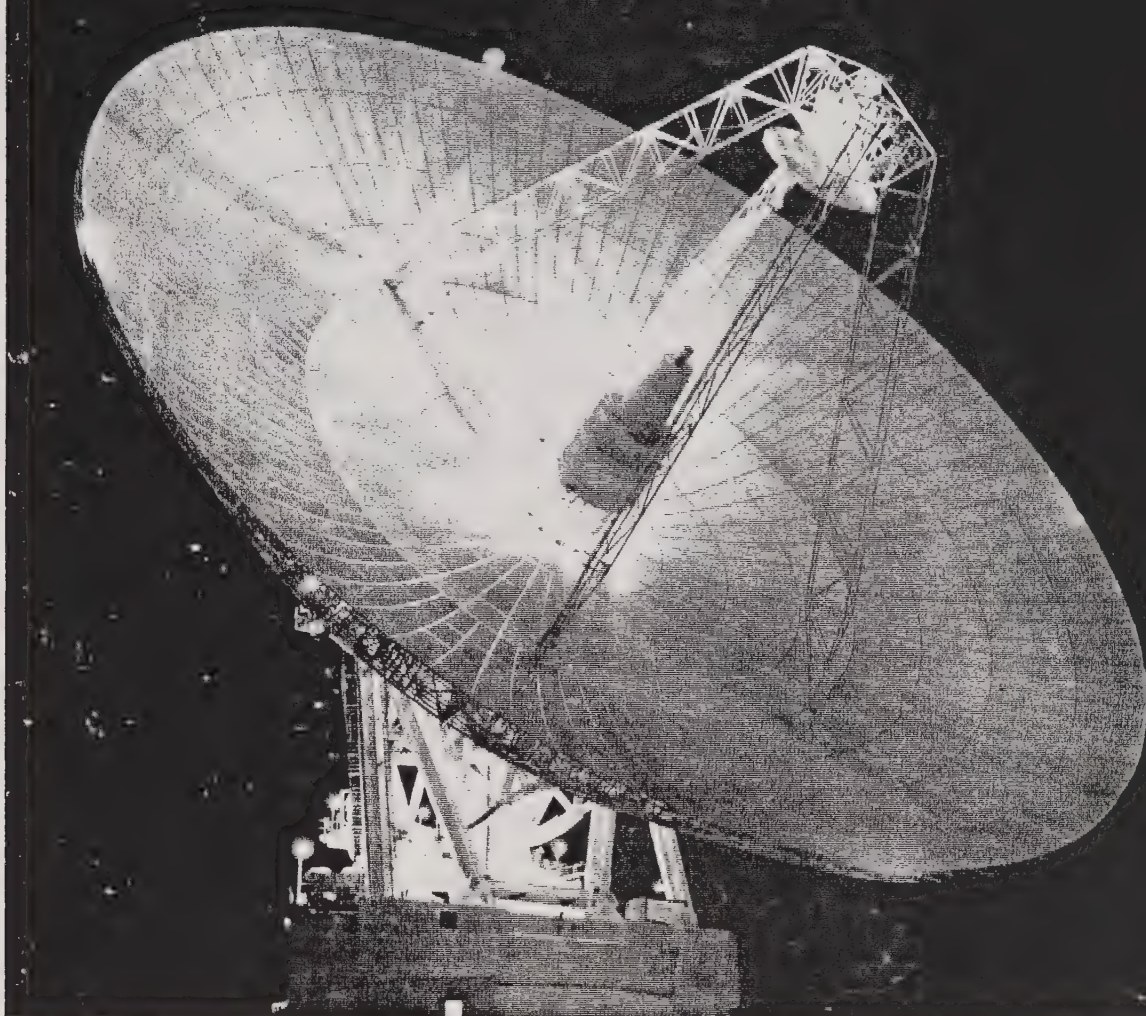
SPACE “GADGETS”

For Fortune Magazine I photographed , the Lunar Excursion Module, the LEM.(photo?) It was the vehicle which shuttled two astronauts from the tip of the Apollo rocket, the Command Module orbiting the moon, to the surface of the moon and back. It was manufactured at Grumman on Long Island. It's a strange looking contraption. Standing inside at the controls dressed in a light green garment covering me from head to toe to prevent “fall-out” like one dandruff of mine contaminating the LEM. Just imagine the moon contaminated with Loebel self-replicating dandruffs, covering the sea of tranquility, and changing it into the sea of restlessness. I was looking out through the triangular windows and imagined flying over the lunar landscape at low altitude. A far step from choo-chooing on the sidewalk around the block in Vienna as a boy of four.

Also for Fortune I photographed the Hubbell space telescope at Perkins Elmer in Connecticut. It is about the size of a railroad car (photo). The hall in which it was assembled was kept at higher pressure so nothing could enter from the outside and contaminate it.

It was almost unbelievable, that this multi-million Dollar instrument, once in orbit, could not produce a sharp image. The curvature of the primary mirror was off --- a 100 million Dollar mistake. It was “fixed” in space by adding a correcting element. But, any additional element adds at least two surfaces to the optical system degrading the image. As a purist I know that the less surfaces a light-ray has to penetrate in an optical system the better the image quality.

On the west-coast I photographed a deep space dish. These sentinels are large. A concave 220 foot in diameter dish , made of aluminum



De Laval components, known in industry for high reliability, perform a vital function in this 210-foot Goldstone antenna.

Nowhere is the reliability of systems, equipment, and components more important than in the space program. This is certainly true in the 210-foot antenna at the Goldstone Deep Space Communication Complex operated for NASA by Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Here, De Laval IMO rotary pumps supply oil to a high pressure system feeding hydrostatic bearings. Ordinarily applications like this require specially designed equipment. But these De Laval IMO pumps are

the same *standard* models that provide high reliability service in industry, utilities and ships of all kinds. During four years' operation at Goldstone these pumps have required no maintenance.

De Laval serves the nation's space programs with many other products, too. These include engine restart control components for launch vehicles and hydromechanical actuators for satellites and missiles. Many carry De Laval's "Adel"

name, known for complete aerospace subsystems...valves and pressure regulators...clamps and brackets. You'll find De Laval products throughout today's growth industries...in nuclear power plants...chemical process plants...pipelines...and advanced marine vessels. The De Laval family includes such widely recognized brand names as "Barksdale," "Lucas," "Delroyd," and "Enterprise" as well as "IMO" and "Adel."

De Laval Turbine Inc., Trenton, N. J. 08602.

SPACE "GADGET"

1968

mesh looks quite beautiful. The dish was in the locked down position which is horizontal. I climbed, and walked inside the dish up to the edge. No barrier, about a hundred feet above ground.

I set up my camera at a distance of 500 feet. NASA who operates the dish, gave me a remote-control the size of a large shoebox. With it I could move the dish. When not in use the dish is horizontal, representing the least wind-resistance. I moved it to a 60 degree position, pointing up, and rotated it to provide a $\frac{3}{4}$ view. I took day shots and night shots of it. I had a Japanese assistant at the time. He had walked into my studio a week earlier followed by his little wife carrying his large and heavy case filled with photographic samples. I hired him. Here, we were in California, north-west of Barstow in the desert. Hiroshy, complained: "you tuff man, I tired." He seemed to have been still on Tokyo time.

Commercial Photographers like to do "covers". They are well paid and make prestigious samples. I did a "Fortune 500" cover. It was an elaborate laser set-up. This 500 largest companies in the United States issue inspired me to create a what I would call a "Misfortune 500", containing the 500 smallest company in the United State, but I did not have the time to indulge, it could have been and still could be hilarious. I photographed General Electric's first atomic reactor. It was in Schenectady. I climbed all over it to find unusual angles, and clicking away. Before leaving, I was checked for radiation contamination. The Geiger-counter went haywire when they checked out my shoe-soles. Another atomic reactor I photographed was the Batelle Memorial Institute's. This one was a so called swimming pool reactor. The core, of course highly radio-active, was kept at the bottom of a large "swimming pool" to protect the people working with it. The core could

be clearly seen. It radiated an eerie blue glow which made for a mysterious photo.

When the American Heritage Magazine was established I became the staff photographer. My first job was to drive to Sturbridge, Ma. to photograph an American eagle which was to appear on the upper left of the covers. The American museum in Sturbridge gave me the wrong eagle to photograph. Better than the wrong desert. I drove back, four hours, the same day, to bring home the right eagle. It still appears on the magazine's cover.

* * *

SAILING DOWN THE HUDSON ON A SUNNY AFTERNOON.

The advertising agency for Cunard Lines wanted a photograph of the Queen Mary steaming into New York harbor, but not from the air. To come up with a special photo I was looking for an unusual vantage point. To find one I decided to rent a boat and go up the Hudson river from the Statue of Liberty along the west-side piers. Alice found a boat for rent in the Yellow Pages. I was to board it the next morning at 11 at the 79 street Yard-basin weather permitting.

The next day was beautiful, clear, a crisp spring day. Before leaving I had to pick something up at Windt, our neighborhood drugstore on first avenue. Mr. Windt, an old man had emigrated from Hungary many years ago. I invited him to join me. Mr. Windt, I said, I rented a boat to ride on the Hudson. It's a lovely day, why don't you come with me? At first he hesitated, but his employees nudged him on: You are in this country 50 years and you never really saw the Statue of Liberty. Come on, join Mr. Loebel. He did, I grabbed my Hasselblad, and we took a taxi to the yard basin on the Hudson. The boat came on time. It appeared to be a 35 foot Diesel. We climbed on board, and I told the captain to go down the Hudson to the Statue of Liberty, turn around, and on the way back I would take photographs. I had some warnings but disregarded them. The captain smelled of alcohol, the boat strongly of diesel oil. We left the pier, a breeze dispersing the odors and my doubts.

Manhattan, even more beautiful in the sparkling sunshine, made me look forward to the ride. But soon my enjoyment was dampened by the smell of Diesel oil which seemed now much stronger than when I boarded. The captain had disappeared down the stairway and I became

alarmed that he left the boat to find its own way in the traffic on the Hudson. We passed mid-town when he finally came back up and told me we have to turn around, and he added: "the boat's on fire"!!! We turned and it took, what seemed to me an eternity, to get back to 79th street. Meanwhile heavy smoke came out the stairway. Our skipper repeatedly blew his horn to announce an emergency and finally I saw in the distance along the shoreline a boat leaving the yard-basin's pier and approaching us. In addition two coast-guard helicopters circled overhead. During all this time Mr. Windt had not left my side. When the boat from the basin was closing in I seized Mr. Windt's arm and my Hasselblads and jumped into it. Now flames came out the staircase. Suddenly there was a muffled explosion and the boat we just had left burned and sank, and that was that. I do not think its captain went down with it, there was no iceberg and no orchestra.

It was late when I got home. Alice had gone to bed. She said from under the blanket : "How did it go?" and I said: "OK, except our boat burned, blew up, and sank". Of course Alice did not take me seriously. Only the next morning when I showed her the Daily News front-page; "Boat on East river explodes and sinks" it dawned on her that there may have been some truth to my story.

Mr. Windt, later, confessed that this boat-ride was his most exciting adventure since he arrived in this country. The photo of the Queen Mary turned out OK. It was taken with a long lens framing the Queen on the left and right with sky-scrapers.

* * *

ENGLISH WATER SPIDERS

Through its advertising agency Connecticut Light & Power Company hired me to produce a TV commercial based on a certain spider's unique ability to live under water in an air bubble it built for itself.

To produce this commercial I needed first and foremost the spider, then a fish-tank, a camera with a macro-lens, and a camera -support which enabled me to follow the busy fellow smoothly up and down. Last but not least I needed a spider-man, an expert to advise me.

The spider I needed is indigenous to England. We got permission to fly 12 of the little fellows into JFK airport and three weeks later a BOAC pilot, hand-carrying the spiders in a glass jar, rang our door-bell on east 74 street. We, Alice and I were ready for our new house guests. I emptied the jar into the tank we had prepared and told them go to sleep and get used to the time-change first. The spiders were very small insects the size of a lowercase "o". I put out a call for my spider-man Dr. John Cook who worked with Mrs. Gray, a spider-woman, at the museum for natural history in New York. I knew Mrs. Gray. once I had borrowed from her a black widow spider and its mate to be photographed. She said at the time: "I do not expect "him" back, but I hope you will return "her". Yes, "she" ate her mate, and I did retune her with him inside.

Unfortunately I was unable to get a hold of Dr. Cook. He had disappeared into the swamps of the Everglades.

The next morning --- catastrophe! The tank had sprung a leak and there was no water left in the tank. Six of my precious spiders were still in the tank. And Alice found two more on the floor. It was a close call. Now I prepared the back-up tank. Again I planted sea-weed, filled

it with water and added my eight survivors. Again I tried to reach my spider-man, but he still was somewhere in the Florida swamps.

My spiders were still alive, but they must have been hungry. What do you feed English water spiders? Dr. Cook, where are you now that I need you?? We discussed our problem. How about Hamburger meat. We had fed it successfully to our praying mantis a year ago. They liked it, however, spiders are a different breed, moreover, how do you serve meat under water? Then Alice had a brilliant idea. Spiders do eat flies, right ? But where do you catch flies on east 74 street between Madison and Park ?? Simple, in front of the house. After all our neighborhood was rightly known as the dog-shit district. Alice took a butterfly net and went out to catch flies. Passer-bys would stop to watch this good-looking well-dressed lady with her green net. "Excuse me, what are you doing?" Alice answered "I am catching flies". What for??, For my spiders!! The pedestrians gave her a strange look and quickly continued on. One of our spiders, well fed, actually started to build his dream house. It was amazing to watch. It would rise to just below the water surface, turn around and seemed to have the right idea. It stuck its rear end out into the New York air. It needed strength to push it through because of the surface tension of the water. It then dived to a certain spot it had selected in the weeds dragging new air wedged between its hind-legs. It stopped at the bubble penetrated it and added the new air it had brought down. With my special camera suspension, General Camera's Ray Emeritz built, I was able to follow the spider's movements smoothly and hold focus which at this magnification was no more than 2mm deep. My Bolex with a 75mm Switar macro-lens performed at its best, well magnified and pin-sharp. I named my protagonist Winston. With patience I captured one

continuous 15 second take, of Winston penetrating the surface four times and diving four times to deposit air into his bubble house. This sequence made Alice and me, and CL&P very, very happy. I know Dr. Cook finally emerged from the Everglades, but after I was finished with hand-fed Winston. I met Dr. Cook later. He had joined a London production company specializing in scientific documentaries.

* * *

100,000 TONS

Tenneco needed a close-up film sequence of the bow of a tanker cutting through the water. I contacted a New York harbor pilot. He arranged for me to board a diesel boat in Red Bank NJ, the same boat he took to meet a tanker he was to guide into the NY harbor. We were four. The pilot, the boat's captain, my assistant Bernard, and myself. I had my 16mm Arriflex loaded to hand-hold it to film the event. Our meeting point was the Ambrose light-ship, way out at the harbor entrance. When we arrived at the light no tanker in sight. The pilot raised the ship on his radio. It will be here in 30 minutes. The engine off our boat bobbed up and down, and up and down, in a moderately ruff sea. An insidious way of waiting because invariably under these condition sea-sickness creeps up on you. I did not believe it but both, the pilot and the captain of the boat got sick, but Bernard and myself did not. Finally on the horizon we saw the ship. Approaching, it became enormous. It was cutting through the water fast, about 22 knots. A rope-ladder was hanging over the side about 20 feet from the bow. I expected the tanker to slow down to take on the pilot. It never occurred to me that you just do not slow down a hundred thousand tons and if you do it would take many, many, many miles, and cost money. Our boat, now accelerating, lined up next to the monstrous ship towering like a mountain over us. The bow waves crashing over our little boat ,and when we were abreast with the ladder our pilot, attaché case hanging at his side, jumped to catch the ladder almost disappearing in spray and spume as he climbed up. Now the captain of my boat put on full power to get ahead of the tanker. He placed his little boat --- everything is little next to 100,000 tons --- as I requested

straight in front of the tanker. I, bracing myself with one arm around one of the two posts holding up a roof, hand-holding my Arriflex, zoomed in and framed the bow of the monster and filmed. Wave after wave crashing over our fast boat. The water coming down between my lens and the bow dramatized the violent reality of this boat-ride. 100,000 tons viewed at a distance of only 300 feet coming straight at you is fearsome. If our engine would have died, we would have too. It was only later that I realized that this may have been one of the most dangerous assignment of my career. In an aircraft, or helicopter, or parachute there is a probability to float to safety in an emergency. In our boat there was nothing, zilch, curtains.

* * *

THEY STOLE MY SUN SET

I was watching a sunset when an idea crossed my mind. It would take 30 minutes to film the sun setting over Manhattan and disappearing behind the sky-line, but, if I kept my camera rolling, the sky would turn dark, and the camera would also capture the lights in the now dark sky-scrappers come on and changing into a luminescent sky-line.

If I filmed in "Time-Lapse" I could easily speed this event up so the projection time would be only 30 seconds. The sun would enter in the left upper corner of the frame and rapidly descend in a straight line to the right lower corner. while the sky would turn from blue to red, to black, while the city lights would come on slowly.

My assistant, Jim Riley, and I set up the time-lapse camera on the top floor of a warehouse along the east-river pointing over Brooklyn bridge south-west at the down-town sky-line. When the sun was about to enter my frame I started filming, exposing one frame every 3 seconds. The result was an eye-catching sequence, perfect for a TV commercial. We never should have, but Alice and I were still inexperienced in the film business, and we did send the test-footage to Young & Rubicam agency, one of the top agencies, for consideration.

When they did not call back, I called them about once a week to find out if they sold the idea. Their response was always. "Your footage is under consideration." It was about a month after I had sent the test-film over, that I got on the phone and insisted they immediately return the film. It came and we showed it to Con Edison. They wanted it and offered \$10,000. I signed a contract, but, received a call the same afternoon. "The deal is off, your idea was aired last night in an Eastern Airline commercial."

Eastern Airline was a client of Y&R. A Y&R producer, had hired one of his filmmakers to produce the sun-set footage for their client Eastern Airline, while he kept deliberately stalling me. When he finally returned the footage the Eastern Airline commercial was ready to go on the air.

I wanted to sue, Alice was hesitant. A friend advised me to submit the whole thing to the "Ethics Committee". I never heard of it, but looked into it and discovered that the man in charge of the "Ethics" Committee was non other than the man in charge of Young & Rubicam Advertising Agency. So much for ethics.

The amounts of money involved in the film business are much higher than the amounts in the still photographer's. This makes film a rougher medium. We learned our lesson.

* * *

EPILOGUE

Better than analysis, writing "Recollections" helped me realize what and who I am. I emerged with a severe case of what can be called "the curse of self-recognition." It also made me realize how vulnerable I was as a child, and how psychologically handi-capped I emerged.

At less than three I could not tolerate to be left alone in a dark room. When put to bed the door to the adjoining room had to be left open so I could hear my parents voices. I often pondered what on earth my parents, and/or maids, governesses, cooks, or chauffeurs did to me that I was so terrified. In December, shortly before Christmas every year the "Devil" (Krampus) would come to see us. I was told that he would take me if I had not been a good boy. He was impersonated by my mother, carrying a big rough bag over her shoulder. I was scared stiff to wind up in "his" bag. I was scared stiff of "him". The damage my parent's thoughtlessness, and teaching of wrong values inflicted was considerable. Of course it affected me for the rest of my life. Lucky are children whose parents have at least a rudimentary knowledge of child-psychology, or just common sense.

I was often asked how did you survive Auschwitz ? Of course luck was a major factor. For instance I was lucky to be sent to Auschwitz. This seems to make no sense, however, Auschwitz was the only one of the five killing centers which did not kill all Jews on arrival. While Auschwitz had the largest and most complex killing installations, and more Jews were killed there than in any of the other killing centers, it also supplied labor to industry. On arrival about 250 out of one-thousand Jews were retained for slave labor. In other words arriving

Jews had a chance. No such chance was given to Jews arriving at Sobibor, Belzec, and other extermination camps.

Also health, age, and medium physical size contributed to my survival. So did my profession and knowledge of German. Let me add that my sense of humor never left me and may have contributed to my survival. Here is an example:

Tommy, George and I had to load steel plates onto a flat-top RR car. It was hard and terrible work to handle the very heavy plates without finger protection. In the background were the ever smoking and flaming chimneys, burning Jews, day and night, just a few hundred yards away. The heavy black stinking smoke was drifting low over our heads, when George pointing at the smoke said: "If you see a little patch of blue—that's me. A bit later I made a crack. Tommy laughed and said: "I'll remember this one", and I replied: "You won't need a good memory." (Hangman's humor). In spite of a screwed up childhood, brain-washed fellow citizens, school mates, teachers, and, in spite of traumatic experiences, I succeeded in a most competitive profession in the most competitive place --- New York City. I am still in relative good health and have been married to a wonderful woman for 50 years. So, how lucky can I get ?

Finally, let me speak in defense of the perpetrators, who, I believe, were victims too. Most nations participated in the slaughter of the Jews. The Austrians excelled in it. 90 percent of the actual killers, the extermination camp's SS guards, were Austrians. Closely behind the Austrians were the Baltic nations, Poles, Hungarians, and Ukrainians, however, these, in contrast to the Austrians, lived in extremity -- under a vicious occupation by the Russians or Germans. The French' conduct was appalling, the Germans' was too, but they

were by no means the worst. It should be noted that the Teachings of contempt, with particular emphasis on Deicide, the worst of all accusations against the Jews, was sermonized in most Catholic countries, particularly in Austria. It always astounds me when in books like Eric A. Johnson's "Hitler's Silent Helpers" or Daniel Goldhagen's "Hitler's Willing Executioners" the authors, investigate the role of the ordinary citizens during the Holocaust, but place little, if any, emphasis on the major role the teachings of contempt of the Jews played. It also should be remembered that these citizens received no spiritual guidance from their churches. In fact some were led to believe that punishing the reprobate Jew may be a good deed. Before we all sit in judgment we should pause and ponder. Would we, as Germans or Austrians, have been immune to the teachings of contempt of the Jew, and the diabolic rhetoric of Hitler?

* * *

Herb Loebel
Southbury, Ct.
October 2000

